

CITIES IN THE BALKANS

SPACES, FACES, MEMORIES

EDITED BY
ROUMIANA IL. PRESHLENOVA

BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
INSTITUTE OF BALKAN STUDIES WITH CENTRE OF THRACOLOGY
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Authors: Roumiana Il. Preshlenova, Dobrinka Parusheva, Andreas Lyberatos, Nikolay Aretov, Alexandre Kostov, Kalina Peeva, Zorka Parvanova, Yura Konstantinova, Malamir Spasov, Fotiny Christakoudy-Konstantinidou, Joanna M. Spassova-Dikova, Alexandra Milanova, Valeria Fol, Maria Levkova-Muchinova, Valentina Vaseva, Georgeta Nazarska, Elmira Vassileva, Antoaneta Balcheva - authors

Authors of peer-reviews:

Ivan Parvev

Daniel Vachkov

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CONTENT

PREFACE	9
INTRODUCTION FROM THE BALKAN CITY TO THE CITY IN THE BALKANS: TRANSFORMATIONS AT THE END OF THE 19TH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY	
<i>Roumiana Il. Presblenova</i>	11
MODERN CITY IN THE BALKANS: DIRECTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF RESEARCH	
<i>Dobrinka Parusheva</i>	23
THE SOUNDS OF MODERNITY: EXPLORING THE BALKAN CAPITALS’ SOUNDSCAPE (LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY)	
<i>Andreas Lyberatos</i>	47
DREAMING CONSTANTINOPLE: AN ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF PETKO TODOROV AND NIKOLAY RAYNOV	
<i>Nikolay Aretov</i>	69
NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THE CITIES IN THE BALKANS: GAS LIGHTING IN OTTOMAN CONSTANTINOPLE UNTIL THE FIRST WORLD WAR	
<i>Alexandre Kostov</i>	83
A STRATEGY OF A BEAUTIFICATION, OR HOW “THE DECADENT ISTANBUL” TURNED INTO THE “PEARL OF TURKEY”	
<i>Kalina Peeva</i>	103

BULGARIANS IN THE URBAN POLITICAL LIFE OF EUROPEAN TURKEY IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE YOUNG TURK COUP	
<i>Zorka Parvanova</i>	133
“THE BULGARIAN SALONICA”	
<i>Yura Konstantinova</i>	153
ON THE PAST, MEMORY, RECOLLECTIONS AND HISTORY OF THE BULGARIANS IN “SIMVASILEVUSA”	
<i>Malamir Spasov</i>	177
URBAN SPACE IN THE GREEK POETRY OF THE 1920S (BASED ON EXAMPLES FROM CAESAR EMMANOUIL’S WORKS)	
<i>Fotiny Christakoudy–Konstantinidou</i>	207
THE THEATRE AND THE CITY. ON THE WAY OF EUROPEANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION OF BULGARIAN CULTURE	
<i>Joanna Minkova Spassova-Dikova</i>	221
OPERA AND MODERNIZATION: THE CASE OF BULGARIA	
<i>Alexandra Milanova</i>	237
BACKSTAGE THEATER	
<i>Valeria Fol</i>	259
THE BULGARIAN ECONOMIC ELITE IN PLOVDIV IN THE 19TH CENTURY (SOCIAL AND PROPERTY PROFILE OF A PLOVDIV FAMILY)	
<i>Maria Levkova-Muchinova</i>	267

**FUNERAL AND COMMEMORATION CEREMONIES FOR MEMBERS OF
THE SOVEREIGN FAMILIES IN BULGARIAN CITIES AFTER THE LIBERATION**
Valentina Vaseva 283

**WOMEN HONORARY CITIZENS IN THE SOCIAL SPACE OF SOFIA
(FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY)**
Georgeta Nazarska 305

**PROTESTANTS IN A BALKAN TOWN: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AMERICAN
MISSIONARIES AMONG THE BULGARIANS IN BITOLA
(19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY)**
Elmira Vassileva 323

**ZAGREB IN BULGARIAN LITERATURE DURING THE FIRST HALF
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**
Antoaneta Balcheva 349

PREFACE

The multifaceted urban development in the Balkans is often on the agenda. It brought together established and younger scholars at the conference entitled “The City in the Balkans: Spaces, Faces, Memory” that was held on 2-4 October 2019 in Sofia. The gathering was organized by the Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and was dedicated to the 150th Anniversary of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. It was supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science under Cultural Heritage, National Memory and Social Development National Research Program. The conference focused on the city as a phenomenon and center of public life, as a stage but also as a real actor in urban development and underdevelopment. The broader concept of the issue allowed scholars from different disciplines to present their research on the city in its social, political, and cultural dimensions in one context or another. They discussed the state of the art, as well as some novel approaches and sources for urban studies.

A selection of contributions on a large variety of themes was collected to represent the studies on the transformation of the Oriental Balkan city in the Modern Period. Roumiana Il. Preshlenova’s contribution introduces the main topic of the volume: the urban transformations in the Balkans at the end of the 19th and in early 20th century in a comparative context. Dobrinka Parusheva presents a historiographic overview of the trends in the research on modern cities in the Balkans from mid-19th to the mid-20th century carried out during the last three to four decades. Another overarching contribution is the article of Andreas Lyberathos on the sounds of modernity in the Balkan capitals Athens, Sofia, and Belgrade.

A number of case studies illuminate the development of the cities in the Balkans as well. Constantinople, later on Istanbul, is one of the focal points in the volume. The time span of the studies dedicated to the city on two continents starts from the Modern Period with Nikolay Aretov’s contribution on an alternative vision of Constantinople as a dream in Bulgarian national mythology. Alexandre Kostov explores gaz lighting in Ottoman Constantinople in late 19th and early 20th century. The urban reconstruction and “beautification” of Istanbul during the Turkish Republic in 1923-1960 revealed by Kalina Peeva is the next article.

Different aspects of urban life are regarded in another cluster of articles. The study of Zorka Parvanova is dedicated to Bulgarians in urban life in European Turkey immediately after the Young Turk Coup. Yura Konstantinova analyses individual and collective memory of Bulgarians about Ottoman Salonika as captured in literature and cinema. Malamir Spasov also explores the history of Bulgarians in Salonika in memories and recollections from the perspective of culturology.

The article of Fotiny Christakoudy–Konstantinidou focuses on urban space as reflected in Greek poetry of the 1920s. Joanna M. Spassova-Dikova traces the role of the theatre for building urban culture and memory in the process of asserting the national identity at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the context of the modernization and Europeanization of Bulgarian society. Alexandra Milanova develops this issue when analyzing opera music and opera houses as a structuring element of urban modernity in Bulgaria since late 19th century. Valeria Fol's study retraces how an evacuated theatre was run during the Second World War.

The next contributions are dedicated to little-known aspects of urban history. Maria Levkova-Muchinova explores the Bulgarian economic elite in Plovdiv in the 19th century through the history of the Chalakovs wealthy family. Valentina Vaseva focuses on funeral ceremonies for members of the Bulgarian royal families in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Georgeta Nazarska reflects on women in Sofia who were awarded an honorary citizenship for their charitable activities up to 1944, applying the methods of social mapping and social network analysis.

The last texts in the volume go further to the West. Elmira Vassileva analyzes the contribution of the mission station of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Monastir (Bitola) where it was active from 1873 to 1920. The various faces of Zagreb as revealed in literary works, travelogues, letters, and travel notes are the topic of Antoaneta Balcheva's article who seeks to establish a broader context of the literary links between the Croatian capital and some emblematic representatives of the Bulgarian intelligentsia.

The texts included in the volume are outcomes of the academic work of scholars whose theses and assumptions do not bind the editor. Each contribution has undergone an independent double scholarly evaluation. The different approaches and methods will enrich the current state of the art and hopefully stimulate further research on the inexhaustible theme of cities in the Balkans.

INTRODUCTION

FROM THE BALKAN CITY TO THE CITY IN THE BALKANS: TRANSFORMATIONS IN LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY¹

Roumiana Il. Preshlenova

Abstract: *This text draws the attention to some major transformations in urban development in the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th century in a comparative perspective. It offers an outline of the dissolution of the more or less uniform pattern of the Oriental Balkan city followed by the introduction of complex social, economic, and cultural novelties under European influence. This unique transition is regarded in the context of nation-building.*

Keywords: *City, Balkans, Urban Development, Nationalism, European Influence*

In the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides quotes Nicias, the Athenian general during the war, who said that the city is the people. From the course of history that followed, especially in modern times, we have learned that the city is above all the energy of the people who live in it.

With his study on the Balkan city, published almost half a century ago², Nikolai Todorov outlined the main economic and social characteristics of this phenomenon, which took shape after the imposition of the Islamic rule in South-eastern Europe. This research is remarkable for the Institute of Balkan Studies and

¹ This work was supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science under Cultural Heritage, National Memory and Social Development National Research Program approved by DCM No 577 of 17 August 2018.

² N. Todorov, *The Balkan City, 1400-1900*. Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1983.

has been translated into a number of foreign languages. According to N. Todorov, during the Ottoman era the Balkan city developed as a result of the merging of local urban traditions from the Middle Ages and the imposed Ottoman feudal system. Both Christian and Jewish, as well as Muslim populations had an active role in its formation. The main factors for this process were the progressive growth of intra-Balkan trade, the strengthening of the economic ties between neighboring regions, between the interior of the Balkan peninsula and the major consumer centers such as Constantinople, Edirne, Thessaloniki and others. They affected the urban economy in all parts of European Turkey. The norms for artisan production, trade and their organization were set by the Ottoman state, and they were generally reduced to equalization regulations. Based on this, the Balkan city developed the general essential characteristics of an Oriental city such as economy, form of social organization, urban structure, and architecture.

Along with many other changes in Southeastern Europe in the 18th century, the wealth of urban population, which was not included in the Ottoman military and administrative system, increased. Moreover, it is evident from archival sources suitable for statistical analysis that the main force of economic progress were the subjugated peoples who had to overcome the hostility of the ruling elite and only in some cases received the support of the state. In the period between the 1830s and the 1870s, small and medium-sized towns prevailed in the Balkans. The urban network in Serbia and Greece was less developed in comparison to the one in the Danubian Principalities, respectively in Romania, and in the Bulgarian lands. Most cities had a mixed population of Muslims and non-Muslims, while homogeneous ones were rather the exception. At that time, the number of inhabitants in larger cities was increasing due to internal migration and the influx of rural population, while in small towns it was stagnant. The labor migration involved mainly the Stara-Planina-region, Thrace, Macedonia, the Greek lands and islands, Wallachia and Moldova. In the 19th century, over 60 per cent of the urban folk in the Danube region was engaged in handicrafts and trade. There, the urban elite consisted not only of representatives of the Ottoman government, but also of Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. The shape and architecture of the Balkan cities from the Carpathian Mountains to the Mediterranean Sea had many more similarities than differences until the second half of the 19th century. Their most important common feature was the fusion of the economic premises for handicraft and/or commercial activities with the residential part of urban dwellings. Exceptions were some houses of the wealthiest members of urban elites. The differences were due to the specific terrain, climate peculiarities and the formation of regional styles in architecture.

In the 19th century, especially intensively after the Crimean War (1853-1856), the cultural and civilizational code of the Christian population changed precisely in the Balkan city. The main channels through which strong impulses for change penetrated the Balkan societies from outside were: more intensive trade relations with Central and Western Europe³; connections with the diplomatic and consular representatives of the Great Powers established since the middle of the century in the more important cities of the Ottoman Empire; European travellers; Catholic and Protestant missions in the Balkans; education of young people from the region in European schools and universities; encounters with the liberation ideologies of Italians, Hungarians, Poles. Most influential among the accelerators of the processes of transformation in the Balkans were the ideas of the French Revolution and of the then modern Liberalism which undoubtedly had long-term impacts on the political, economic, and cultural life.

At the same time, remarkable changes were taking place outside the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th century in cities in Western Europe and North America as a result of the industrial revolution and the growing number of workers. Mark Girouard, one of the most prominent modern architectural historians, describes what happened there as an explosion⁴. In cities such as London, Manchester and Paris at that time, the vast profits from trade with colonial goods found expression in the magnificent urban construction works, preserved until nowadays. The pulsating life of the city, with all the opportunities and temptations it offered, attracted masses of people from all social groups, races, religions and backgrounds from different continents, mixed them and gradually turned them into citizens. In 1811, London became a city of one million inhabitants, in the 1840s this happened to Paris, and in the 1880s – to Berlin. In the major European cities, Roman traditions were reformulated by shaping and partially applying the basic urban schemes with concentric rectangular or circular zones. The city center was formed around a core of representative public buildings, parks, palaces, and houses of the social elites were built around them. Completely new elements occurred such as boulevards, gas and electric lighting, public transport. The construction of boulevards and streets was legally regulated, and their naming marks the beginning of specific public policies and culture. In Southeastern Europe, this happened for the

³ “Europe” in this text is used as a synonym for Central and Western Europe. For its constructivist sense as a discursive product and performative act see W. Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*. Wien, Böhlau, 2000.

⁴ M. Girouard, *Cities & People. A Social and Architectural History*. New Haven, London, Yale University Press, 1985.

first time in the Danubian Principalities in 1856 in Bucharest. The big, called also world exhibitions, organized periodically from the mid-nineteenth century onwards in the industrial countries, also left a legacy of iconic and hitherto unknown technological structures such as the 1851 Crystal Palace in London, three times the size of the city's St Paul Cathedral; the Eiffel Tower from 1889 in Paris, the most recognizable building in the world and the tallest one in France until 2004; the Giant Wheel (*das Riesenrad*) from 1897 in the Viennese Prater, near which the Waltz King Johann Strauss the Son performed at the time.

The 19th century was a time not only of astonishing creation, but also a century of wars and revolutions. They also contributed to the transformation of the big cities, especially the Napoleonic Wars and the Revolutions of 1848, by showing those in power how impractical the narrow winding streets were to suppress resistance. But that was not all. The idea of the nation spread among all enlightened elites, who passed it on to the masses and embodied it in literature, architecture, opera, theater, and the fine arts.

A turning point in the development of the city in the Balkans were the national liberation struggles of the Christian population under the rule of the sultan. The two Serbian Uprisings, the Greek Revolution, the unification of Wallachia and Moldova, the April Uprising of 1876 of the Bulgarians and the ensuing Russo-Turkish War of 1877/78 forced the Great Powers to impose the establishment of the nation-states of Serbia, Greece, Romania, Montenegro and Bulgaria in the territories reconquered from the Ottoman Empire. Bosnia and Herzegovina came under Habsburg rule. These crucial changes in the region were accompanied by dramatic population migrations. According to some Western researchers, in the century after 1821 about five million Muslims left the former possessions of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and on the Black Sea coast. In 1878-1913, 1.7 to 2 million Muslims emigrated from the Balkans alone to the territories where the Republic of Turkey was established later⁵. At the same time, thousands of displaced Christians returned to their or their ancestors' lands. Some 350,000 Muslims emigrated from the Principality of Bulgaria between 1879 and 1911, and between 143,000 and 171,000 Bulgarians arrived in it from the territories that remained within the Ottoman Empire as well as from the Bulgarian colonies in Romania, Russia, and the Habsburg Monarchy. The de-urbanization ensuing the Russo-Turkish War of 1877/78 lasted for a short time, as the share of urban population in Bulgaria remained permanently at the level of 19-20 per cent with a con-

⁵ M. Mazower, *The Balkans*. London, Phoenix Press, 2001, p. 11.

stant higher natural growth in the villages. In Serbia at the end of the 19th century, the urban population amounted to 13 per cent, in Romania it was 18 per cent, and in Greece – 33 per cent⁶. Of course, purely statistically, the city had a different definition, legal status, and scale in each Balkan country. In many cases, at least at the end of the 19th century, it did not differ significantly in this respect from the large settlements with non-urban status.

The sweeping modernization from the previous era, apparent most of all in the Danubian cities, were being further developed by the nation-states in the Balkans. In many places in the hitherto unplanned Oriental city with dirty winding streets, pre-approved urban schemes were applied, new streets and boulevards were laid. The yards immersed in pretty greenery with wooden or adobe houses in the city cores mostly were replaced by adjacent buildings. Many of the existing mosques, madrassas, and hans (inns) were destroyed. Minarets ceased to dominate the urban skylines. With some exceptions, cities were no longer divided into neighborhoods by ethnicity, but by property. Bazars were increasingly losing their structuring role in the new urban environment. Where cities were destroyed during the liberation wars new ones emerged. A number of urban centers were acquiring urban plans elaborated by “European” architects and engineers. The new city core consisted of squares with representative buildings of the administration and cultural institutions. Many elements characteristic of European urban centers were implemented in the larger cities in the Balkans. A completely new moment were the monuments of national heroes: known and unknown warriors, revolutionaries, and educators. In Bulgaria, memorials and churches were erected as expression of gratitude to the victims of the Russian army in the liberation war of 1877/78. Some of these transformations were imposed by force. For the most part, however, they have been inculcated and supported by the elites and the more enlightened part of the population. As far as opposition is concerned, it was caused by considerations of the required financial expenses and the specific ways of implementation of the respective projects. By the way, the reconstruction of Paris, for example, in the middle of the 19th century after the revolution of 1848 was carried out with much more drastic measures and the destruction of part of the urban environment.

The nation-states in the Balkans acquired their capitals, most of which did not coincide with those of their predecessors from the Middle Ages. Moreover, Athens (1834), Belgrade (actually from 1867) and Sofia (1879) were built as cap-

⁶ H. Sundhaussen, *Historische Statistik Serbiens 1834-1914. Mit europäischen Vergleichsdaten*. München, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1989, S. 102.

ital cities in settlements that were not the leading urban centers at that time for the respective country. Compared to other European capitals, they were small in population and urbanized area. An exception is Bucharest, which officially has been the capital of the united principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia since 1862. As of 1830, the city had almost 54,000 inhabitants, about 10,000 temporary residents from the province and 1,044 foreigners. In 1836, Athens had only 14,000 inhabitants, approximately the same as Belgrade (in 1838 its population was 12,900), and on the eve of the Liberation in 1878 Sofia had a population comparable to them (some 17,000 people). The demographic boom of the capitals in the following years was due exclusively to the influx of native population. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, however, the capitals of the nation-states in the Balkans remained small compared to other European cities and were the only ones with a population of over 100,000 people for the respective country. The latter does not apply to Belgrade which did not exceed this number until the end of the First World War. It is important to recall that, even on the eve of the 20th century, a significant part of the urban population of Serbia were Serbs born abroad: in Old Serbia, Austria-Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Montenegro, Italy, Russia. Perhaps the most dramatic increase in the number of residents recorded Sofia. Between 1880 and 1905, its population quadrupled, and many of the settlers were Bulgarians from Macedonia and Thrace which had remained under Ottoman rule⁷.

Towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the big cities in the nation-states in the Balkans visibly changed their appearance. The definition Balkan in the sense of Oriental no longer fit them perfectly, despite the fact that a significant share of urban population still preserved their rural lifestyle and culture. The capitals were becoming a specific stage of the nation-state. There, the main efforts and financial resources for modernization were concentrated to demonstrate the chosen European path of development. In addition to the palace of the monarch, representative public buildings were being built in the capital: seats of the respective parliament, government and municipal councils, academies, universities, libraries, theaters, and operas. The newly built churches were commensurate with them in scale. Merchants who returned from emigration, local elites who had amassed wealth during the liberation struggles, and foreigners initi-

⁷ Велинова, З., И. Начев, *София и балканската модерност (1878-1914)*. София, Рива, 2016; Г. Георгиев, *Населението на София (1878-1944)*, В: Г. Георгиев, Б. Матеев (съст.). *София през вековете. Т. 2. Столица на нова България 1878-1944*. София, Издателство на БАН, 1991, с. 49.

ated the construction of hotels, banks, casinos, and houses with fine architecture, most often in the neoclassical style that dominated at the time. Railway stations became part of the cityscape. Outside the central part of the city, as well as in villages, churches started playing a structuring function.

A significant part of the changes were public works. The implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects began: water pipelines were built (in Belgrade in 1892, expanded in 1894 and 1906/7, in Sofia in 1894), sewerage was introduced (in Belgrade in 1905; in Sofia in 1893). Electrification started in the capitals and in some larger cities (in Belgrade in 1880 and 1894; in Sofia in 1879 and 1900). Some of the central streets in the bigger cities were paved. In 1907, between the Palace and the National Assembly in the Bulgarian capital, the emblematic yellow paving stones, imported from Austria-Hungary, were laid, and became a landmark of the city. Citizens started socializing while walking in the main streets and parks. European furniture, musical instruments, household items, clothing and accessories penetrated the life of the urban elite who dressed in line with fashion in Paris, Vienna, and Budapest, and this already became normative⁸.

In Athens, King Otto commissioned Stamathios Kleanthis (1802–1862) and Eduard Schaubert (1804–1860) to design the layout of the modern centre of the city. Danish, Bavarian, French, and Greek architects such as Hans Christian Hansen (1803-1883), Franz Karl Leopold von Klenze (1784-1864), François Boulanger (1807-1875), and Lysandros Kaftantzoglu (1811-1885) designed most of the representative buildings in the newly established capital of Greece⁹.

Bucharest, where about one third of the buildings were destroyed in a devastating fire in 1847, took shape as a capital under strong French influence. The majority of children of local boyars and of the middle class studied in France, less

⁸ D. Parusheva, *Europe Imagined and Performed: The Impact of Western Europe's Modernity on South East European Urban Space*, In: Ralf Roth (Hg.) *Städte im europäischen Raum. Verkehr, Kommunikation und Urbanität im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009, S. 187-204; M. Hartmuth, *Negotiating Tradition and Ambition: Comparative Perspective on the "De-Ottomanization" of the Balkan Cityscapes*, *Ethnologia Balkanica*, 2006, vol. 10, pp. 15-33; H. Heppner (Hg.), *Hauptstädte in Südosteuropa: Geschichte, Funktion, Nationale Symbolkraft*. Wien-Köln-Weimar, Böhlau, 1994; *Idem* (Hg.) *Hauptstädte zwischen Save, Bosporus und Dnjepr: Geschichte-Funktion-nationale Symbolkraft*. Wien, Böhlau, 1998.

⁹ A. Papageorgiou-Venetas, *Eduard Schaubert 1804–1860: der städtebauliche Nachlass zur Planung der Städte Athen und Piräus*. Mannheim, Bibliopolis, 2001; A. Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations in the Balkans (1820-1920)*. Thessaloniki, University Studio Press, 1996.

in Germany and Italy. Little surprise that the urban scheme of Georges-Eugène Haussmann with a star-shaped structure and perpendicular boulevards in the East-West and North-South directions, applied in Paris as a massive renovation program after the revolution of 1848, was also adopted in Bucharest. French architects and Romanians, graduates from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, designed the new capital of Romania. Suffice to recall two emblematic sites in Bucharest - the Romanian Athenaeum (1889) and the Central University Library with the statue of King Carol (1895) designed by French architect Paul Gotero. They leave no doubt about the cultural model that the country's elite decided to follow. Around the middle of the 19th century, Bucharest acquired the iconic *Cișmigiu* Park (1852) and a botanical garden (1860). Certain similarities in the architecture of Bucharest and Paris are more than evident. Romanians dubbed their capital "Little Paris" (*Micul Paris*) not only for its elegant architecture, but also for the fact that around 1900 local elites greeted each other in French, dressed according to Parisian fashion, frequently traveled to the French capital, and studied there¹⁰.

Belgrade was reshaped under strong Austro-Hungarian impact. There, modern architectural styles implemented architects such as Jan Nevola, Alexandar Bugarski, Jovan Ilkić, Konstantin Jovanović¹¹.

The reforms in the administration and the judiciary and the large-scale construction works undertaken in 1864-1868 by Midhat Pasha in the Danubian vilayet with the capital Rouse were only the beginning of the transformation of the larger Bulgarian cities after the Liberation. In the 1880s, political commitment accounted for the regulation plans in 36 of them, i.e. about the half, in implementation of the law of 1881. Prominent architects and engineers from Austria-Hungary such as Viktor Rumpelmayer, Friedrich Grünanger, Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Gottlieb Helmer, Karl Heinrich, Peter Paul Brang, Joseph Schnitter, Andreas Greis, Antonin Václav Kolář, Václav, Jiří and Joseph Prošek left durable traces in the biggest Bulgarian cities. Along with them worked local architects such as Petko Momchilov, Yurdan Milanov, Georgi Fingov, Nikola Lazarov, who had received

¹⁰ E. Constantini, Dismantling the Ottoman Heritage? The Evolution of Bucharest in the 19th Century, in E. Ginio, K. Kaser (eds.), *Ottoman Legacies in the Contemporary Mediterranean: The Balkans and the Middle East Compared*. Jerusalem, The European Forum at the Hebrew University, 2013, pp. 231-254; C. C. Giurescu, *History of Bucharest*. Bucharest, Publishing House for Sports and Tourism, 1976.

¹¹ Д. Стојановић, *Калдрма и асфалт. Урбанизација и европеизација Београда 1890-1914*. Београд, Удружење за друштвену историју, 2008; Велинова, Начев, *Софија и балканската модерност*.

their education in Prague or Vienna. Their work as well as those of foreigners such as Fr. Grünanger created the iconic combination of the Central-European Sezesion and the “national” style which represents the Medieval local traditions¹².

The transformations of the city in the nation-states in the Balkans took place with the direct participation of the state and the municipal authorities, often of the monarch as well. Their role included not only securing financial resources in the form of internal and external loans in the conditions of scarce own capital and underdeveloped banking system and industry. By the way, the renovation of Paris between 1853 and 1869 was carried out on the will of Napoleon III, with the direct participation of the state and the municipal authorities, with huge loans and tax increases to make it a world landmark. In the Balkans, such expensive projects needed both financial mobilization and the ideological motivation of society.

The fact that the capitals of the Balkan states became disproportionately large in comparison to the other cities in the respective country was also not unique. Similar was the development in Central and Western Europe. It is not a coincidence that Wilhelm Heinrich Riel, the founder of Agrarian Romanticism and anti-urbanism in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century, defined large cities as the hydrocephali of modern civilization (*Wasserköpfe der modernen Civilisation*)¹³.

In sum, from the 15th to the middle of the 19th century the development of the Ottoman Empire created the Balkan city as a synthesis of local traditions and the new, in its nature Oriental culture. Towards the middle of the 19th century, the Balkans began to transform which occurred first of all in the big and port cities. The elites of the liberated Christian nations readily embraced and adapted modern European influences to erase the unwanted traces of the past. As Maria Todorova explicitly points out, the construction of an idiosyncratic Balkan self-identity, or rather of several Balkan self-identities, constitutes a significant distinction: they were invariably established against an “Oriental” other (most often the Ottoman Empire and Turkey) and portions of one’s own historical past (usually the Ottoman period and the Ottoman legacy)¹⁴. In this sense, the destruction of mosques was only part of the process of demonstrative emancipation or de-Orientalization.

¹² *Creative Impact of Vienna on the Architecture of Sofia from the End of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Century*. Sofia, Regional History Museum Sofia, 2018.

¹³ W. H. Riehl, *Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Social-Politik. Erster Band. Land und Leute*. Stuttgart und Tübingen, J. F. Cotta’scher Verlag, 1854, S. 75.

¹⁴ M. Todorova. *Imagining the Balkans*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Indeed, the changes in many respects were demonstrative and superficial and did not affect deeper levels of social structures and behaviour. Some of them have been criticized, but they had no alternative and outlined the irreversible direction of future development on two levels: public and private. The Balkan city passed into history, and in its place cities of different appearance were built. Each one established its own little world. The planned structure of the city, its architecture, organization, and urban life were the most visible expressions of the changes. They served also as a clear political and cultural message to the whole nation for the purpose and directions of future development. Thus, as a result of political and technical measures a new image of the city in the Balkans was created and it was diverse.

Literature

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Roumiana Il. Preshlenova

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
roumiana.preshlenova@balkanstudies.bg*

MODERN CITY IN THE BALKANS: DIRECTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF RESEARCH¹

Dobrinka Parusheva

Abstract: *This text seeks to present an overview of the main directions in the research on modern city in the Balkans, from mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, which has been carried out during the last three to four decades. The aim is to offer a possible typology of this research and, in addition, to suggest a few conceivable perspectives of future investigations in some areas of urban life, which have not been substantially covered by now.*

Keywords: *Modern City, Balkans, Urban Studies, Historiography*

Modern, modernity, modernization

In everyday life language, *modern* is usually used in opposition to *old-fashioned*. As part of academic discourse, though, the word family of *modern* and *modernity* denote, on the one hand, a specific socio-cultural context that is relatively close to our contemporary period. On the other hand, *modernity* may also refer to a model to be followed – and in this case the term is closely linked to *modernization*. I am fully aware of the different possible interpretations of the term *modernization*, so let me specify that I use it to denote all different processes that we observe during the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society in the context of social and economic history, history of technology, cultural studies, and so on. On its own, the term *modernization* includes

¹ This work was supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science under *Cultural Heritage, National Memory and Social Development* National Research Program approved by DCM No 577 of 17 August 2018.

implicitly the presence of action and development in a particular – desirable or undesirable – direction.

In recent years, scholars have reached consensus that it is impossible to discuss solely one model according to which to measure the levels of modernity, and as a result the term *multiple modernities* has been introduced². Despite that, the *modernization* in the Balkans as a social process – or rather as a series of processes – has always meant Europeanization for its contemporaries. My long-held interest in the history of the region has convinced me (and not only me) that modernity which Balkan societies aspire to adopt is *European modernity*³. In other words, in this case, *modernization* can be conceptualized as a synonym of *Europeanization*. This is particularly relevant when discussing the transformations of cities in the Balkans in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, directly linked with two of the main aspects of modernization: *industrialization* and *urbanization*, both important for urban studies.

Modernization and urbanization, modern city

The interest toward the modern, industrial city arose as early as the start of the twentieth century in response to the changes taking place in Western Europe and the USA. The literature focusing on its character exhibits disagreements between scholars of urban studies: on one side stood those who considered that impersonal or “material” forces determine the fate of the city (the Chicago school - mainly Robert Park and Ernest Burgess and their followers sociologists and anthropologists later on), and on the other were those (such as Max Weber and Georg Simmel, for instance) who insisted that sociocultural factors were the main source of change. Despite those disagreements, there was a uniting element in the

² See Sh. N. Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*, *Daedalus*, 129/1 (Winter, 2000), p. 1-29.

³ What they understand as *Europe* is a question I do not discuss here, I have done it elsewhere. – See e.g. D. Parusheva, “*ORIENT-EXPRES*“, or About European Influences on Everyday Life in the Nineteenth Century Balkans, *New Europe College Regional Program Yearbook 2001-2002*, Bucharest 2003, p.139-167, or *Eadem*, Europe Imagined and Performed: The Impact of Western Europe’s Modernity on South East European Urban Space, In: R. Roth (Hg.) *Städte im europäischen Raum. Verkehr, Kommunikation und Urbanität im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag 2009, p. 187-204.

studies of the modern city: their interdisciplinary character, which could be either on the level of problematization, or in the unity of methods used in those studies⁴.

If we focus our attention on Europe, we could single out two main points in discussing modern cities: technological uniformity and cultural diversity⁵. For Western and Central Europe, those processes began in the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century; in the Balkans they took place slightly later – around the mid-nineteenth century, and not earlier than in the 1930s. Therefore, we can discuss the presence of modern cities in the Balkans precisely from the mid-nineteenth century onwards; in addition, I must emphasize that few cities could claim this title – in most cases it would be more accurate to insist on placing it in quotation marks, “modern”⁶.

The modern urban life was created and depended on technological systems, urban planning, and a number of artifacts, buildings, networks, and structures. When the administration of the Ottoman Empire and the urban elite of Istanbul initiated widespread urban upgrades and sanitary reforms in the end of the nineteenth century, they explicitly aimed to “modernize” the city by following the examples of other metropolises – Berlin, London, and Paris. Germany and Great Britain offered the technological models for fresh running water, and France – measures for improving public health⁷. The Ottoman elite promised that the new technologies would bring with themselves a “modern” way of life, and that promise was repeated in many languages and in many places thereafter. The attractive albeit not particularly precise understanding of modernity compelled many cities to introduce hygienic water systems in the second half of the nineteenth century, as was the case with the implementation of urban grids favorable to automobile traffic in the second half of the twentieth century. While separate technological projects were frequently subject of criticism and protests – primarily because of

⁴ Cf. М. Златкова, *Етносоциология на града. По примера на град Пловдив*. Пловдив, УИ „Паисий Хилендарски“, 2012, p. 14.

⁵ Mikael Hård and Thomas J. Misa, the editors of the volume *Urban Machinery. Inside Modern European Cities* (Cambridge, MA and London, The MIT Press, 2008), share similar ideas.

⁶ For further elaboration see D. Parusheva, Running “Modern” Cities in a Patriarchal Milieu: Perspectives from the Nineteenth-Century Balkans, In: Ralf Roth and Robert Beachy (eds.), *Who Ran the Cities? City Elites and Urban Power Structures in Europe and North America, 1750-1940*. Ashgate 2007, p. 179-192.

⁷ N. Dinçkal, Arenas of Experimentation: Modernizing Istanbul in the late Ottoman Empire, In: M. Hård, Th. J. Misa (eds.) *Urban Machinery. Inside Modern European Cities*. Cambridge, MA and London, The MIT Press, 2008, p. 49-69.

the high social and cultural price they involved, the general project of modernity was seldom questioned⁸. And the cities – not only in the Balkans, but in general – served as a showcase of the creation of the modern world and as a central object of the dreams of modernizers.

Modern city in the Balkans and its investigators: state of the art

The aim of the present text is to provide a summarized insight on the main directions in the investigation of the modern city in the Balkans in the last few decades and, building up on this, to attempt to identify possible perspectives for future research in not so well explored areas of urban morphology and urban life⁹. I would like to immediately clarify that my attention is focused on studies of the processes taking place in cities in the Balkans between the mid-nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century. The main reason for such a limitation links directly to the necessity of an analysis of these processes: after World War II, the region transforms into Eastern Europe, which leads to researchers using much more frequently the term “socialist city” in reference to the majority of the Balkans at the expense of the “modern city”. I will not delve deeper into the terminology and the timeframe, as my main goal is to propose my interpretation of the main directions in the studies of the thus defined (albeit swiftly) modern city in the Balkans. I emphasize that in the brief review that follows, I am discussing mainly (although not exclusively) historical studies. The inclusion of more ethnological and sociological research, as worthy of attention as they may be, would have increased the scope of the present study too far.

First, let me indicate that there is no general study of the modern city in the Balkans – similar to *The Balkan city 15th -19th century* of Nikolay Todorov for the preceding period¹⁰. Investigations of the modern cities in the Balkans, and here in

⁸ Cf. for example Th. Rohkrämer, *Eine andere Moderne? Zivilisationskritik, Natur und Technik in Deutschland 1880-1933*. Paderborn, Schöningh, 1999.

⁹ I deliberately avoid to define „the Balkans”, yet I need perhaps to explain briefly that what I have in mind is mainly (although not exclusively) the territories which were – one way or another, at one or another period of time – parts of the Ottoman Empire’s possessions.

¹⁰ The well-known book of Nikolay Todorov (Н. Тодоров, *Балканският град XV-XIX век*. София, Наука и изкуство, 1972), which is translated into several languages, is not discussed here despite the fact it covers also the nineteenth century; the reasons for this omission may be a topic of a separate analytical text.

plural, are not few, however. This is the reason I focus on the more recent ones that appeared in the last decades of the twentieth century up till the present day. My selection is unquestionably subjective, limited, and, therefore, not exhaustive. It is neither possible, nor necessary to list all existing studies on the topic, as my goal, as already stated, is to illustrate the main strands within the wide array of studies dedicated to the modern city in the Balkans instead of presenting an exhaustive bibliography.

The ones to receive the greatest research attention – and perhaps unsurprisingly so – have been the capitals of the Balkan states in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Their transformation into national centers was part of the process of establishment and affirmation of the nation-states in the Balkans, and precisely this problem area still dominates historical studies in most Balkan countries. We should not forget that the changes in the direction of Europeanization (or modernization) began as early as the first half of the nineteenth century; that is, they were not solely related to the rejection of the Ottoman power and the creation of the nation-states. In practice, these processes began in the time when the different parts of the Balkans were still under Ottoman rule, since the Ottoman Empire itself recognized the necessity of change and made the first steps in attaining them. In the mid-nineteenth century, the imperial capital became a true *arena of experimentation* (after Noyan Dinçkal, as cited previously), and Zeynep Çelik accurately describes the changes there as *Remaking*¹¹.

The processes in the successor states of the Empire received serious impetus after rejecting the foreign administrative governance. That was also the moment in each of the Balkan states when an additional aspect to the processes of the modernization in the region appeared, which has been consensually labeled by researchers as de-Ottomanization, thereby denoting the aim to attain the quickest and furthest distancing possible from the characteristics (at least the visible ones) of the Ottoman or the Oriental. In a broader scale, the fate of the Ottoman heritage in the Balkans is discussed by Maria Todorova¹². As far as the de-Ottomanization of the urban space focused on separate cities or countries is concerned, it has been discussed by many other historians: Yorgos Koumaridis analyzes the changes in Greek cities, Emanuela Constantini looks at the evolution of Bucharest, and

¹¹ Z. Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*. Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1986.

¹² M. Todorova, *The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans*, In: L. Carl Brown (ed.), *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*. Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 45-77.

Bernard Lory, Roumiana Preshlenova, and Krzysztof Popek discuss the different manifestations of the phenomenon in the Bulgarian urban sphere¹³. The examination of the processes of change in the urban space and architecture in the last decades of the nineteenth century in a regional context immediately brings attention to the presence of parallels. Unfortunately, comparative studies are more of an exception rather than common practice¹⁴. In most cases, the focus is on a single city, or on multiple ones in one of the modern Balkan states¹⁵.

The capitals first became “laboratories” for testing almost all new ideas: there is no doubt that they depended on the existing technological systems, urban planning, and a whole array of artifacts, buildings, networks, and structures. Publications on the capital cities in the Balkans are plenty, but I would like to emphasize that the urban dwellers and urban culture were a significantly weak-

¹³ Y. Koumaridis, Urban Transformation and De-Ottomanization in Greece, *East Central Europe / L'Europe de Centre-Est*, 33 (2006), N 1-2, p. 213-241; E. Constantini, Dismantling the Ottoman Heritage? – The Evolution of Bucharest in the 19th Century, In: E. Ginio, K. Kaser (eds.) *Ottoman Legacies in the Contemporary Mediterranean: The Balkans and the Middle East Compared*, The European Forum at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2013, p. 231-254; B. Lory, *Le sort de l'héritage ottoman en Bulgarie. L'exemple des villes bulgares 1878-1900*. Istanbul, Isis, 1985; R. Preshlenova, Wegweiser sozialen Wandels. Über die Verdrängung des Orientalismus aus Bulgarien seit 1878, In: Ulrike Tischler-Hofer, R. Zedinger (Hg.) *Kuppeln, Korn, Kanonen. Unerkannte und unbekannte Spuren in Südosteuropa von der Aufklärung bis in die Gegenwart*. Innsbruck, Studienverlag, 2010, p. 243-263; K. Popek, “To Cut Down the Forest of Minarets”: The Transformation of Bulgarian Cities after 1878, In: M. Gibiec, D. Wiśniewska, L. Ziątkowski (eds.) *The City and the Process of Transition from Early Modern Times to the Present*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle upon Tyne 2019, p. 79-93.

¹⁴ As an example of comparison the approach of Maximilian Hartmuth can be listed: M. Hartmuth, Negotiating Tradition and Ambition: Comparative perspective on the “De- Ottomanization” of the Balkan Cityscapes, *Ethnologia Balkanica*, vol. 10 (2006), p. 15-33; *Idem*, The Historic Fabric of Balkan Towns: Space, Power, Culture and Society, In: S. Doempke, A. Lulo Caca, S. Petrela (eds.), *Four Historic Cities in the Western Balkans: Value and Challenges*. Tirana, Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organization, 2012, p. 17-22.

¹⁵ I will point out to one example of each type only: A. Velagić, A. Krhan (eds.), *Bosanskohercegovački gradovi u procesu političke modernizacije (1850-1950)*. Sarajevo, University Press / Mostar, Muzej Hercegovine, 2013; N. Vuco, L'europeanisation des villes en Serbie au XIX^e siècle, In: *Istanbul à la jonction des cultures balkaniques, méditerranéennes, slaves et orientales aux XVI^e-XIX^e siècles*. Bucarest, UNESCO/AIESSE, 1973, p. 107-113. The majority of the publications cited below confirms the opinion about the attention of researchers directed to one single context usually.

er “magnet” for the attention of researchers – at least quantitatively the studies dominate, that are dedicated to the modern urban planning, urban network, and architectural changes in the capitals and the directly linked to them practices and policies of the local authorities.

Sometimes the changes taking place were so significant that, in the case of the Greek capital for instance, the new urbanistic design urged the researcher Eleni Bastéa to discuss the outright *creation* of modern Athens¹⁶. No doubt, as in the already mentioned Istanbul and Athens, in the other Balkan capitals as well (and in many other cities, too) the models of Western and Central Europe were followed; even more so, in some cases this was done with an emphasized determination, as Roumiana Preshlenova discusses in the Bulgarian cities after 1878¹⁷. Moreover, in many cases the people carrying out the changes were not local specialists, but experts from Western and Central Europe. This was particularly relevant to the experts of urban planning – let me remind, for instance, of the role of Leo von Klenze in the creation of the tectonic skeleton of the city-to-be Athens, or the importance of the general plan of Belgrade dating back to pre-World War I, designed by the Franco-Belgian architect Alban Chambon, or the presence of the engineers Joachim and Wilhelm Bartel and the draftsman and painter Joseph Oberbauer in the department “Cadastre and regulation” of the Sofia municipality in the end of the nineteenth century. Their role, as well as the role of myriad other professionals, has been studied profoundly by the investigators of the city in the Balkans¹⁸. The number of specialists from Balkan countries who studied abroad in Central and

¹⁶ E. Bastéa, *The Creation of Modern Athens. Planning the Myth*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

¹⁷ R. Preshlenova, Bulgaria’s European Orientation Reflected in Town Development after the Berlin Congress 1878, In: Sl. Gzell, L. Klusakova (ed.) *Peripheries or Crossroads of Cultures? Towns of East-Central and South-Eastern Europe* (= Urbanistyka, V), Warszawa, Akapit-DTP, 2000, p. 7-12.

¹⁸ F. Pecht, Klenze, Leo von, In: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, herausgegeben von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Band 16 (1882), S. 162–166; Z. Vuksanović-Macura, A. Banković, *Mere grada: Karte i planovi iz Zbirke za arhitekturu i urbanizam Muzeja grada Beograda*. Beograd, 2018; G. Doychinov, H. Ganchev, *Österreichische Architekten in Bulgarien 1878-1918*. Wien, Böhlau Verlag, 2001; see also П. Йокимов (съст.) *Австрийски архитектурни влияния в София, краят на XIX – началото на XX век*. София, 1998 and Д. Желева-Мартинс и Ю. Фърков, *История на българското градоустройство XIX-XX век. Първа част: Диахронни анализи на устройството на големите градове*. София, Изд. „Валентин Траянов”, 2009.

Western Europe before beginning to contribute with their professional skills to the modernization of the cities in the region is also large.

Namely the exchange and circulation of experts, ideas, systems, and artifacts created the conditions for homogeneity on multiple levels in relation to the modern city. Despite that, every European city – including the Balkan ones – maintained or in some cases reconstructed a great deal of their specific historical character. A good example of this is Belgrade, the capital of Serbia: although the historian Dubravka Stojanović links directly the urbanization of Belgrade with its Europeanization from the very title of her book, she also stresses the opposition old-new, mentioning simultaneously the cobblestones and the asphalt, thereby exemplifying one of the most characteristic urban spaces that becomes object of intensive change: the streets¹⁹. Besides urban planning and communal systems presented by the analysis of a multitude of documents, plans, and photographs, Stojanović turns her attention to the citizens and their way of living too, which enriches her biography of the modern Belgrade²⁰.

It is curious to note, at least in my opinion, the lack of a newer monographic history of Bucharest after the one by Constantin Giurescu from 1966 that has been republished multiple times, but involves not only the modern city, and instead covers everything “from the oldest time to present-day”²¹. Modern Sofia enjoys much greater or at least more stable interest. The Bulgarian capital is an object to multiple studies from an ethnological and sociological point of view²². Historians, however, are still indebted to the city, at least monographically. Here I must mention the book of Zornitsa Velinova and Ivaylo Nachev *Sofia and the Balkan modernity*, dedicated to the modernity of two Balkan capitals (Sofia and

¹⁹ Д. Стојановић. *Калдрма и асфалт. Урбанизација и европеизација Београда 1890- 1914*. Београд, УДИ, 2008.

²⁰ The topic of the opposition old-new has been discussed by other authors too, e.g. Miloš Jovanović, “The city in our hands”: Urban management and contested modernity in nineteenth-century Belgrade, *Urban History*, 2013, 40 (1), 32-50.

²¹ C. Giurescu, *Istoria bucureștilor*. București, Editura pentru Literatură, 1966 is not only re-published many times; it is also translated into several European languages (e.g. Constantin C. Giurescu, *History of Bucharest*. Bucharest: The Publishing House for Sports and Tourism, 1976).

²² See Г. Георгиев, *София и софиянци (1878-1944)*. София, Наука и изкуство, 1983; М. Якимова, *София на престолюдието (С тарикатско-български речник)*. София, Изток-Запад, 2010; С. Паунова-Мурджева, *(Пре)създаване на столицата. Социокултурно изследване върху градоустройствените практики на София след Освобождението*. София, 2011.

Belgrade) and three other large cities (Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Sarajevo) which in the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century were still not capitals²³. The work of these younger colleagues is valuable and strong, and I hope they continue their practice in the field of urban history/urban studies by going beyond urban morphology and communal policies.

In relation to the time after World War I, I will only mention the monograph of Peđa Marković on the European influences in Belgrade, the recently published (in the start of 2020) book of Tanja D. Conley on the urban architecture in interwar Yugoslavia, whose focus is Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, and a compilation on the first years of republican Istanbul as a capital of an illusionary world, edited by Stefanos Yerasimos²⁴ – this period somehow does not attract the attention of researchers, at least not enough to give rise to memorable monographs²⁵.

Finally, before turning to the studies dedicated to other big cities in the Balkans, let me point out to the “capitals” twin volumes edited by Harald Heppner, as well as to another volume edited by Marco Dogo and Armando Pitasio that deals again, although not exclusively, with the function of the Balkan capitals as national symbols²⁶. Precisely that is the most characteristic element in both the aforementioned publications and the omitted separate studies on the capitals, published

²³ Велинова, З., И. Начев, *София и балканската модерност. Белград, София, Загреб, Любляна, Сараево (1878-1914)*. София, Рива, 2016. To what extent (and if at all) Zagreb and Ljubljana belong to the Balkans is a question, which may be scrutinized, at least in my view.

²⁴ P. J. Marković, *Beograd i Evropa 1918-1941. Evropski uticaji na proces modernizacije Beograda*. Beograd, Savremena administracija, 1992; T. D. Conley, *Urban Architectures in Interwar Yugoslavia*. New York, Routledge, 2020; S. Yerasimos (ed.) *Istanbul, 1914-1923. Capitale d'un monde illusoire ou l'agonie des vieux empires*. Paris, Éditions Autrement, 1992.

²⁵ As an exception, perhaps, a history of the everyday life in Romania in the interwar period may be mentioned, where Bucharest is in the focus: Ioan Scurtu, *Viața cotidiană a românilor în perioada interbelică*. București, RAO, 2001. If we turn the attention to the articles, many more publications dealing with the time between World War I and World War II can be spotted, yet again the quantity is not impressive and the majority of them come from the 1980s and 1990s. See, for instance, K. Kafkoulas, In search of urban reform: Co-operative housing in inter-war Athens, *Urban History*, 1994, 21 (1), p. 49-60; J. R. Lampe, Interwar Bucharest and the promises of urbanism, *Journal of Urban History*, 9 (1983): 3, p. 267-290; *Idem*. Interwar Sofia versus the Nazi-style Garden City: the struggle over the Muesmann Plan, *Journal of Urban History*, 11 (1984):1, p. 39-62, etc.

²⁶ H. Heppner (Hg.) *Hauptstädte in Südosteuropa: Geschichte, Funktion, Nationale Symbolkraft*. Böhlau, Wien-Köln-Weimar 1994; Harald Heppner (Hg.) *Hauptstädte zwischen Save, Bosphorus und Dnjepr: Geschichte-Funktion-nationale Symbolkraft*. Wien,

in the academic periodicals – even when the focus is on architecture and urban planning or urban morphology, the emphasis is always, broadly speaking, on the connection between the architectural and symbolic construction of the modern and especially of the national.

Directing our attention to the other, non-capital big cities in the Balkans as object of study, the exceptionally large and constant interest towards Thessaloniki is immediately noticeable – there are perhaps more published monographs and edited volumes on this city (not counting the countless articles) than on all Balkan capitals altogether. What is more, in most cases the focus is specifically on the modernization of the city and the characteristics of its modern life. It suffices to mention the two monographs of Meropi Anastassiadou, as well as those by Sam Lévy on the end of the nineteenth century and by Régis Darques on the twentieth century, without forgetting also the frequently cited book by Mark Mazower, covering several centuries, including the timeframe of my interest (the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century)²⁷. The life of separate communities in the “pearl of the Aegean” also attracts scholarly interest. There are plenty of studies dedicated to the life of the Jewish community: I would mention, besides the older and well-known volume compiled by Gilles Veinstein, only two newer publications: a compilation put together and edited by Ester Benbassa and the monograph of Devin Naar²⁸. As for the other communities, the most recent monograph of Yura Konstantinova (2020), which analyzes the life of the Bulgarians in Ottoman Thessaloniki, deserves notice²⁹. The continuous strong interest

Böhlau, 1998; M. Dogo, A. Pitasio (eds.) *Città dei Balcani, città d'Europa. Studi sullo sviluppo urbano delle capitali post-ottomane, 1830-1923*. Lecce, Argo, 2008.

²⁷ M. Anastassiadou, *Salonique, 1830–1912. Une ville ottomane à l'âge des Réformes*. Leiden, New York and Köln, Brill, 1997; *Eadem, Salonique au XIXe siècle. Regards sur les gens ordinaires*. Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2016; R. Darques, *Salonique au XXe siècle. De la cité ottomane à la métropole grecque*. Paris, CNRS, 2002; S. Lévy, *Salonique à la fin du XIXe siècle*. Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2000; M. Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews (1430–1950)*. London, Harper Collins, 2004.

²⁸ G. Veinstein (dir.) *Salonique 1850 – 1918. La „ville des Juifs„ et le réveil des Balkans*. Paris, Autrement, 1992; E. Benbassa (éd.) *Salonique – ville juive, ville ottomane, ville grecque*. Paris, CNRS, 2014; D. E. Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece*. Stanford, Stanford UP, 2016.

²⁹ Ю. Константинова, *Българите в османския Солун*. София, ИБЦТ-БАН, 2020. This book is only one of the many outcomes of the project *Thessaloniki and the Bulgarians*, funded by the Bulgarian National Science Fund. For additional information see <https://www.solunbg.org/bg/>.

towards this harbor city is not surprising, considering that in the second half of the nineteenth century its spaces were inhabited by several ethnic communities. They were, both separately and altogether, contemporaries of the processes of modernization. Their heirs consequently became citizens of at least three modern Balkan (and not only) countries, and without doubt continue to fuel the interest of the relevant historiographies, if not directly contributing to their enrichment.

Thessaloniki is not the only large (or important) city in the Balkans that attracts scholarly interest. It is followed, albeit with much fewer publications, by Skopje, Bitola, Zagreb, Mostar, Aleppo, Izmir, etc.³⁰

Others, not as large, yet not unimportant cities in the Balkans have also fallen into focus: such are, for example, Bursa, Dobrich, Edirne, Ioannina, Konya, Plovdiv, Rousse, Shkodra, Tuzla, Varna³¹. In most cases, the subject of interest in those cities are the changes they underwent in relation to their urban planning and technological modernization, but not seldom they are discussed with regard to the reaction of the citizens to those changes, as well as their relations between themselves as individuals and as communities.

³⁰ For Skopje see e.g. O. Marina and D. Pencic, *Urban Transformations of Skopje: Fragmented City-Legacy of History*, In: *Proceedings of the International Conference – The Spatial Planning in SEE until Second World War*, 2009. For Bitola: S. Kotsopoulos, *Ethnic Coexistence and Urban Space. Monastiri: A Case of a Balkan City in the Last Ottoman Era*, In: M. Gibiec, D. Wiśniewska and L. Ziątkowski (eds.) *The City and the Process of Transition from Early Modern Times to the Present*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle upon Tyne 2019, p. 65-78; B. Lory, *La ville balkanissime: Bitola (1800 – 1918)*. Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2011; M. Idriz, *The Balkan City of Ottoman Manastir (Bitola): A Model Paradigm of Applied Shari'ah with Reference to Ottoman Judicial Records*, Pelanduk Publications, 2010. For Zagreb: I. Perić, *Zagreb od 1850 do suvremenog velegrada*. Zagreb, Muzej grada Zagreba, 2006. For Mostar: J. Brankovic, *Mostar 1833-1918. Upravni i politicki položaj grada*. Sarajevo, University Press, 2009. For Aleppo and Izmir: E. Eldem, D. Goffman and B. Masters (eds.), *The Ottoman City between East and West: Alepo, Izmir, Istanbul*. Cambridge, CUP, 1999, etc.

³¹ A lot of lines would be necessary to list all the publications, hence I prefer to mention only a few authors who have written in the last decades about: Bursa (Hüseyin Mevsim), Edirne (Filiz Atay), Ioannina (Konstantinos Chatzis), Konya (Abdulhamit Kırmızı), Rousse (Nikolay Nenov), Shkodra (Enriketa Papa), Tuzla (Rusmin Djedović and Benjamin Bajrektarević), Varna (Rumyana Mihneva and Lyudmila Stoyanova) and many others. Perhaps here is the place to mention also the book of Rayna Gavrilova on the Bulgarian town during the nineteenth century: P. Гаврилова, *Колелото на живота. Всекидневието на българския възрожденски град*. София, УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 1999.

Albeit very selective, the brief overview of the studies of the city in the Balkans in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century presented here, as well as the observations on the research field of urban studies in the region that I have accumulated throughout the years allow me to suggest an attempt to systemize the work of researchers from the last three to four decades. It, I must note once again, follows rather subjective criteria and in no case claims to be exhaustive. Rather, it is designed to serve as an invitation for discussion.

Modern city in the Balkans: main directions in research

First of all, I want to emphasize something that should be self-explanatory: research on the cities in the Balkans is (or should be) part of the European urban history. This important characteristic is often forgotten due to the belonging of a large part of Balkan territories to the Ottoman Empire, considered as an Eastern/Oriental type of empire. Despite this incongruence, however, the first type of studies of the modern city in the Balkans, which I would like to put forward, is more of an exception despite the large necessity thereof: these are publications discussing the problems of the **identification or definition of that city**. In them, the focus resides in defining the main characteristics of the modern city in the Balkans that in many of the cases – if not all – are postulated in opposition to the markers of the pre-modern city in the Balkans, usually labeled as *Ottoman*, *Oriental*, or *Islamic*³². As already mentioned, this type of research is a fairly small sample.

³² See e.g. I. Bierman, Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj, D. Preziosi (eds.), *The Ottoman City and Its Parts. Urban Structure and Social Order*. New York, Aristide D. Caratzas, 1991; F. Acun, A Portrait of the Ottoman Cities, *Études balkaniques*, 2001, 4, p. 116-140; M. Hartmuth, Negotiating Tradition and Ambition: Comparative Perspective on the “De-Ottomanization” of the Balkan Cityscapes. *Ethnologia Balkanica*, 2006 (10), p. 15-33; W. Höpken, Die “südosteuropäische Stadt”, In: Th. Bohn, M.-J. Calic (eds.) *Urbanisierung und Standortentwicklung in Südosteuropa vom 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*. München-Berlin, Otto Sagner, 2010, p. 67-91 (Südosteuropa- Jahrbuch, vol. 37); K. Kaser, The Urban Space of Turko-Balkan City, *Балканистичен форум*, 2011, 3, p. 63-69. Here belongs also the research of Alexander Vezekov: he shares the idea about the term *Balkan town* as a construct of the Balkan national historiographies, which has been aimed mainly at differentiating from the terms like *Islamic town*, *Ottoman town*, *Turkish town*, etc. See A. Везенков, Защо и как бе измислен „балканският град“, *Критика и хуманизъм*, 42 (2013), с. 15-37 (this idea was first developed in the author's blog, in 2008); Cf. with the recently published chapter, where he elaborated further on the topic: A. Vezekov, Entangled Geographies of the Balkans: The Boundaries of the Region and the Limits of

A much larger segment is the second type of publications that follows the development of the **city as surrounding/environment**. They pay attention to the physical shape of the city and its morphology, i.e. urban planning, constructions, transport, and the other urban communal systems, and so on. A large portion of this research analyzes the city also as a technology – they investigate and evaluate urban “machinery” that is directly linked with the environment; in other words, they trace the development of the modern city as space for experiments in the process of modernization. As examples of this type I can list, besides the aforementioned studies on the capitals and large cities, the publications of Alexandra Yerolympos and Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis on the urban planning in the Balkans with a focus on the Greek case but also offering comparisons in the Balkan or Eastern-Mediterranean context³³. A main conclusion in their research again is the role of modern urban planning in the formation of national identity in the Balkans in the nineteenth century. Similar studies exist on Belgrade, Bucharest, Plovdiv, Sofia, Thessaloniki. There are also attempts at summary and comparison, e.g. the thematic volume on the capitals after the empires compiled by Tanja D. Conley and Emili G. Makaš (2009)³⁴. To this second group also belong the studies on the development of the main communal systems in the modern cities in the

the Discipline, In: R. Daskalov, A. Vezenkov (eds.) *Entangled Histories of the Balkans. Vol. 4: Concepts, Approaches, and (Self)Representations*. Leiden, Brill, 2017, p. 115-255.

³³ A. Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations in the Balkans (1820 – 1920). Aspects of Balkan Town Planning and the Remaking of Thessaloniki*. Thessaloniki, University Studio Press, 1996; *Eadem*, A new city for a new state. City planning and the formation of national identity in the Balkans (1820s-1920s), *Planning Perspective*, 1993, 8 (3), p. 233-257; V. Hastaoglou-Martinidis, Urban aesthetics and national identity: the refashioning of Eastern Mediterranean cities between 1900 and 1940, *Planning Perspectives*, 2011, 26 (2); *Eadem*, Urban modernization and national renaissance: Town planning in 19th century Greece, 1993, 8 (4); *Eadem*, City form and national identity: urban designs in nineteenth-century Greece, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 1995, 13(1), p. 99-123, etc.

³⁴ T. D. Conley, E. G. Makaš, *Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empires*. Routledge, 2009. The authors of the chapters on the Balkan capitals are Eleni Bastéa (Athens), Tanja Conley (Belgrade), Maria Raluca Popa (Bucharest), Maja Dragičević and Rachel Rossner (Cetinje), Elitsa Stanoeva (Sofia), Gentiana Kere (Tirana) and Zeynep Kezer (Ankara). The two editors pay particular attention to the comparison in the introduction to the volume: Tanja D. Conley and Emili G. Makaš, Shaping Central and Southeastern European capital cities in the age of nationalism, In: *Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empires*, p. 11-38. See also the volume *Balkan Capitals from the 19th to the 21st Century: Urban Planning and the Modern Architectural Heritage*. Athens, Academy of Athens, Bureau of Architectural Research, 2006, where the authors are: Anca Bratuleanu (Bucharest), Ljubinka Stoilova

region. Most of them are related to the development of public transport, lighting, and water supply³⁵. No doubt, these spheres of urban life underwent drastic changes specifically in the period of modernization in the city in the Balkans.

As a third group the research dedicated to **the city as people who inhabit it and to culture they share** may be catalogued. Such a differentiation is not easy to make – I mean dividing of the urban “scene” from the actors that perform on it. Still, it seems to me that the purely urban modernization changes can be separated from the way in which people live in the urban environment, from their everyday life and cultural practices they share. Towards this type of research I would attribute those dealing with the effects of urbanization on the city dwellers (for instance, their transformation in city dwellers as a consequence of labor or other migration³⁶), with the problems of social segregation and polarization in the city, with the life of communities in the city (among them would be some studies on the Jewish communities in Thessaloniki and Istanbul, on the life of Greeks and Bulgarians in Plovdiv³⁷), with the everyday life of women and men, of young and

and Petar Iokimov (Sofia), Miloš Perović and Dragana Ćorović as well as Aleksandar Ignjatović (Belgrade), Emmanuel Marmaras (Athens), etc.

³⁵ See for example A. Kostov, L'industrie du gaz dans la périphérie européenne avant 1914: le cas d'Athènes et de Bucarest. L'histoire du gaz dans les Balkans avant 1945. Aperçu des sources et historiographie, In: S. Paquier, J.-P. Williot (dir.) *L'industrie du gaz en Europe aux XIXe – XXe siècles*. Bruxelles, P.I.E. – Peter Lang, 2005, p. 181-190, 427-429; D. Ćorović, L. Blagojević, Water, Society and Urbanization in the 19th Century Belgrade: Lessons from Adaptation to the Climate Change, *Spacium (International Review)*, 2012, 28, p. 53-59; D. Djapa, Water Management in Urban Context: the Case of Belgrade, In: *Proceedings, The Implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive from International, National And Local Perspectives*. Vienna, Vienna University of Technology, 2006, p. 48-54; N. Dinçkal, Reluctant Modernization: The Cultural Dynamics of Water Supply in Istanbul, 1885-1950, *Technology and Culture*, 2008, 49 (3), p. 675-700; K. Chatzis, A. Mahera and G. Mavrogonatou, Supplying the city of Ioannina with “modern” waters, 1913–1940: The „modern infrastructural ideal’ in a mid-size Greek town, *Urban History*, 2019, 1-16, etc.

³⁶ There is an edited volume with a focus on cities and towns still belonging to the Ottoman Empire, yet it offers a good perspective to the importance of the migrations for the modernization of the cities. See U. Freitag, M. Fuhrmann, N. Lafi, F. Riedler (eds.) *The City in the Ottoman Empire. Migration and the making of urban modernity*. Routledge, 2010.

³⁷ E.g. R. Molho, *Salonica and Istanbul: Social, Political and Cultural Aspects of Jewish Life*. Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2005; the already mentioned monograph of D. Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece* and others; S. Ploumidis,

old people, or publications presenting and analyzing modern characteristics of everyday life in the cities in the Balkans³⁸.

I already mentioned that this attempt at classification is highly subjective and may be criticized from various points of view. In addition, it in no way claims to be exhaustive, as presenting all publications is impossible. Before moving on to the conclusion, I would like to point out another aspect important for the investigators of the city in the Balkans: the organization of scholarly forums looking at various aspects in the history of the modern city in the Balkans. I will limit myself to denoting only three of the conferences specifically discussing the problems of development of the city in the Balkans. These are *Urbanisierung und Stadtentwicklung in Südosteuropa vom 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, organized by Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft in October 2008 in Tutzing and the most recent ones that took place in September and October 2019: *Villes des Balkans : Échelles locales, nationales, globales* in Marseille, under the auspices of the French Association for Southeast European Studies and *The City in the Balkans: Spaces, Faces, Memory*, in Sofia organized by the Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre for Thracology – BAS. Papers connected with the history of the city in the Balkans in the end of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century were presented on all three forums³⁹.

Ethnic Symbiosis in the Balkans. Greek and Bulgarians in Plovdiv (1878-1906). Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2016; А. Кьосев, Пловдив и далечното. Към отношението между културна урбанистика и имагинерна география, *Социологически проблеми*, 2003, 3-4, с. 143-172, etc.

³⁸ For example, the edited volumes: Р. Заимова (съст.) *Кафене Европа*. София, Дамян Яков, 2007; А. Балчева (съст.) *Югоизточноевропейският град и съвременността на миналото. Научни изследвания в чест на проф. Лилия Кирова*. Велико Търново, Фабер, 2012. See also I. Stahl, *Le café au croisement des deux mondes. Exemple d'une acculturation volontaire dans la ville de Bucarest au XIXe siècle*, *Ethnologia Balkanica* 15 (2011); S. Akyazici Özkoçak, *Coffehouses: Rethinking the Public and Private in Early Modern Istanbul*, *Journal of Urban History*, 33 (2007), p. 965-986; M. Erol, *Surveillance, urban governance and legitimacy in late Ottoman Istanbul: Spying on music and entertainment during the Hamidian regime (1876–1909)*, *Urban History*, 2013, 40 (4), p. 706-725; D. Parusheva, "ORIENT-EXPRES", or About European Influences on Everyday Life in the Nineteenth Century Balkans, *New Europe College Regional Program Yearbook 2001-2002*, Bucharest, 2003, p. 139-167, etc. In the special issue "The Worlds of the Balkan street" of the journal *Балканистичен форум* (2011, 3) there are articles too, which address topics related to the modern city in the Balkans and its streets full of life.

³⁹ The results of the first conference are published. See Th. M. Bohn, M.-J. Calic (Hrsg.), *Urbanisierung und Stadtentwicklung in Südosteuropa vom 19. bis zum 21.*

Instead of conclusion: perspectives and opportunities

The establishment of the modern city in the Balkans is fairly well researched as urban morphology (or urban environment) – at least this is the case with the capitals and the larger cities which actually are precisely the ones covering (at least to some extent) the criteria for a “modern city”. The case of the studies of the modern urban way of living is not exactly the same. More than fifteen years ago, I used different terms in a publication to describe and try to analyze the everyday urban life in the Balkans: *the scene* and *the actors*. To this day, “the scene” is what attracts more research attention from the spheres of architecture, urban planning, urban governance and functionality, and so on. “The actors” that ought to be object of attention of those dealing with social history and of ethnologists and anthropologists are still not enough in focus. This is particularly relevant for historians and less so for ethnologists/anthropologists and sociologists – but let me still specify that their studies are mostly aimed at the post-World War II era rather⁴⁰. If we broaden the scope of our interests, we will perhaps pause to consider other intriguing problems – but besides intriguing, they are also crucial for the being of the modern city and its “citiness” – such as the role of the presentation and self-presentation of the city (and especially the ways of visualizing the city and its citizens), the connection between city and ecology, and also the place and meaning of the senses in getting to know and experiencing the city. Topics that have long ago found their place beyond the Balkans⁴¹ and their absence here somehow again makes us feel less modern (as researchers). In that sense, I am exceptionally thrilled by the new direction of research interest of Andreas Lyberatos on the sounds of the city in the Balkans⁴².

Jahrhundert, München-Berlin, Verlag Otto Sagner, 2010. The programs of the other two conferences are available respectively here: https://www.mucem.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/Programme_3e_Rencontres_Etudes_Balkaniques_compressed.pdf

and here: https://balkanstudies.bg/images/Programme_City_in_the_Balkans.pdf.

⁴⁰ There are exceptions and some of them were already cited above (like e.g. the monographs of Paunova-Murdzheva and Yakimova).

⁴¹ Just one example: A. Cowan, J. Stewart (eds.) *The City and Senses. Urban Culture since 1500*. Ashgate 2007 (in this volume texts presented at one of the biannual conferences organized by the European Association for Urban History are collected).

⁴² See, for example, on this issue A. Lyberatos, *The Sounds of Modernity: Exploring the Balkan Capitals' Soundscape (Late 19th – Early 20th C.)*, *Etudes balkaniques*, 2020, 2, p. 189- 208.

The researchers of the modern city in the Balkans, in their majority, conceptualize the city as a (passive) place where something takes place, i.e. they examine the city in history. That is precisely the reason for the lack or minimalistic presence of what we would regard as history of the city/cities – city biographies, or the understanding of the city and the urban as a process in which the role of the city is not passive, but, on the contrary, it is considered a central actor. In 1961 Eric Lampard, one of the famous historians of the city after World War II (especially from the point of view of economics) wrote that if the urban historian wanted to be more than a historian who simply carried out research on the subject of cities, then they had to demonstrate that the term “urban” explained something in history that could not be better explained through alternative analytical frameworks. In brief, according to Lampard, “urban” history ought to denote not only a subject of study, but also a scheme of conceptualization in the same manner that this is relevant for “economic” or “cultural” history⁴³. I believe that more than half a century later, it is time to broaden as much as possible the perspective and to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to the city in the Balkans, not solely the modern one.

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⁴³ E. Lampard, American Historians and the Study of Urbanization, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 67 (October 1961), N 1, 61 – quoted after Th. Hershberg, The New Urban History: Toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City, *Journal of Urban History*, 5 (1978): 3, p. 3-40 (Hershberg uses the words of Lampard as a motto to his text).

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Dobrinka Parusheva

*University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski &
Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
clio_dp@yahoo.co.uk*

THE SOUNDS OF MODERNITY: EXPLORING THE BALKAN CAPITALS' SOUNDSCAPE (LATE 19th – EARLY 20th CENTURY)¹

Andreas Lyberatos

Abstract: *Despite the fact that urban modernity and modernization in the Balkans has been a celebrated topic among social and cultural historians and historians of architecture and urban planning, the dimension of sound has been almost entirely absent from these discussions. The present paper is based on fresh research aiming to fill this gap. It initiates a comparative inquiry about the sonic environment of three Balkan capital cities (Belgrade, Sofia and Athens) during their transition to the industrial era. It offers a panorama of testimonies on the various dimensions, factors and actors creating and transforming the fin-de-siècle Balkan capitals' soundscape (the role of climate and built environment, the natural and biological keynote sounds, the sounds of street vendors and musicians and the mechanical sounds of trams and motorcars). It finally demonstrates, through the example of the noisiest of the three cities, i.e. Athens, the importance of the "soundscape" as a field of signification and socio-cultural conflict in a transitional period for the Balkan city.*

Keywords: *Soundscape, Balkan City, Sensory History, Urban Modernity, Street Vendors*

In the period between the Berlin Congress of 1878 and the Balkan Wars, Belgrade, Sofia and Athens became indisputably the motors of urbanization and the showcases of modernization and "Europeaniza-

¹ Research for the present paper has been conducted in the framework of the Project "Soundscapes of the Balkan and Mediterranean Cities 18th-early 20th c.", which is part of the larger Action KRIPIS-II – "METOPO" implemented at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH. I would like to thank my students Anna Krinaki and Giorgos Manios for helping with data collection. I also thank de profundis the musicologist Anna Papaeti for reading through the text carefully and offering valuable comments.

tion” of their small nation-states². Although at different pace and with differences of magnitude, all three cities grew significantly in population, expanding at the same time spatially³. Finally, alongside their being centers of modern state apparatuses and loci of growing bureaucracies, the three Balkan capitals also started to attract, within an increasingly protectionist international economic environment, new industrial economic activities in or around them, i.e. they grew also “functionally”⁴. Soon, this urban growth raised questions of urban planning, infrastructures and regulation of city life. Both foreign observers and the young nation-state elites saw these as a test ground for their state’s “civilization” and prestige, which, in turn, were regarded as prerequisite for the fulfilment of their geopolitical aspirations. Social historians and historians of urban planning and architecture have so far studied urban modernity of the belle époque Balkans in adequate detail; they have also made insightful comparative accounts not just recently but also earlier⁵.

² A. Yerolympos, A new city for a new state: city planning and the formation of national identity in the Balkans, *Planning Perspectives*, 1993, 8/3, p. 233-257.

³ Athens was at the end of the period under consideration the most populous of the three capitals, having approximately 170.000 inhabitants. Sofia followed with appr. 105,000 and Belgrade with appr. 90,000 souls, yet all three cities were in a process of dynamic growth. Sofia grew demographically fivefold between 1880 and 1910, Belgrade almost threefold between 1884 and 1910 and Athens, similarly, almost threefold between 1879 and 1907. Yerolympos, *A new city*, p. 244-245. On the spatial expansion of Belgrade and Sofia in the second half of the 19th and early 20th c. see Д. Стојановић, *Калдрма и асфалт. Урбанизација и европеизација Београда 1890-1914*, Београд, Удружење за друштвену историју, 2008, с. 23-45; Велинова, З., И. Начев, *Софија и балканската модерност. Белград, Софија, Загреб, Любљана, Сараево 1878-1914*. Софија, Рива, 2016, с. 48, 60, 126-137. On Athens see Χ. Αργιαντώνη, „Η Αθήνα στο τέλος του 19ου αιώνα. Η γέννηση της μεγαλούπολης“, In: Α. Σολωμού-Προκοπίου & Ι. Βογιατζή (επιμ.), *Η Αθήνα στα τέλη του 19ου αιώνα. Οι πρώτοι διεθνείς ολυμπιακοί αγώνες*, Αθήνα 2004, σ. 107-129.

⁴ For the three dimensions of urban growth see M. Derruau, *Géographie humaine*. Paris, Armand Colin, 8e éd. 2007.

⁵ See among others the contributions by D. Stojanović, E. Stanoeva and E. Bastea in J. C. Behrends, M. Kohlrausch (eds.) *Races to Modernity: Metropolitan Aspirations in Eastern Europe, 1890-1940*. Budapest, Central European University Press, 2014; A. Yerolympos, *A new city; Eadem*, Domesticating Modernity through City Building: New Plans for the Balkan Cities, 1900–1922, In: A. Lyberatos (ed.), *Social Transformation and Mass Mobilization in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean Cities 1900-1923*, Heraklion, 2013, p. 25-51; Велинова, Начев, *Софија и балканската модерност*; J. Lampe, *Modernization and Social Structure: the Case of the pre-1914 Balkan Capitals, Southeastern Europe*, 1978, 5/2. p.11-32.

Nonetheless, the dimension of sound is entirely absent from this discussion, despite the fact that sensory history and the study of sonic phenomena have recently attracted the interest of scholars working in or on the Balkans⁶. This article aims to fill this gap by mapping the relevant research field and offering a comparative panorama of testimonies on the sounds of fin-de-siècle Balkan capitals and the attitudes towards them. Finally, focusing on early twentieth-century Athens, it highlights the importance of sonic phenomena for the social and cultural history of the cities of Southeast European periphery during this transitional period.

Sounds and urban modernity

The origins of the rehabilitation of the sonic experience in social theory and history are rather nature-oriented or “rural”. The path-breaking work of Canadian musicologist and composer R. Murray Schaffer increased since the 1970s the sensitivity towards the consequences of human activity for the sonic environment; it called for human responsibility in listening and appreciating natural sounds, creating an aesthetically rich soundscape⁷. French cultural historian Alain Corbin, a pioneer in sensory history, shifted the attention of his colleagues and readers to sonic phenomena by focusing on the nineteenth-century French countryside and the function of village bell-ringing as a semiotic system which reflected social and political relations, enforcing and reproducing identity bonds⁸. The urban sonic environment and experience constitute, potentially or actually, the sharp contrast to

⁶ Social anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have offered recently important contributions (including the study of the urban soundscape). See among others: E. Καλλιμοπούλου, Κ. Κορνέτης, Π. Πούλος, Από το κάλεσμα για προσευχή στις σιωπές του Μουσείου: Ηχοτοπία της Θεσσαλονίκης σε μετάβαση, In: *Θεσσαλονίκη. Μια πόλη σε μετάβαση 1912-2012*, Θεσσαλονίκη, Επίκεντρο, 2015, σ. 316-31; E. Καλλιμοπούλου, „Ακούω-βλέπω-σιωπώ“. Αισθητηριακή ιστορία και προφορικές μαρτυρίες στη Θεσσαλονίκη των προσφύγων, In: *Η μνήμη αφηγείται την πόλη. Προφορική ιστορία και μνήμη του αστικού χώρου*, Αθήνα, Πλέθρον, 2016, σ. 151-68; Π. Πούλος, Απώχιοι της οθωμανικής πόλης στα καλλιτεχνικά σαλόνια (meclis) της σύγχρονης Κωνσταντινούπολης, In: *Η μνήμη αφηγείται την πόλη*, σ. 185-202; Π. Πανόπουλος, Η πατρίδα ως ήχος και ο ήχος ως πατρίδα: πολιτισμικά και προσωπικά ηχοτοπία στα διηγήματα του Χρ. Χρηστοβασίλη, *Δοκιμές*, 2005, τχ. 13-14, 277-307; D. Buchanan, Bells, Bellmaking and Festival Practice as Entrepreneurial Heritage and Markers of Place in Pirin-Macedonia, Bulgaria, *Balkanistica*, 2017, 30, p. 59-83.

⁷ R. Murray Schaffer, *The Soundscape. Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Vermont, Destiny Books, 1977.

⁸ A. Corbin, *Les cloches de la terre: paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIXe siècle*. Paris, Albin Michel, 1994.

both the aesthetic quality and communicative clarity of the countryside soundscape: high population density and concentration of various market and industrial activities in the city produce “noise”, i.e. unwanted sound, while the multitude of sonic stimuli and noise create semantic confusion and produce what Murray Schaffer called a “low fidelity soundscape”⁹. The intensification and exacerbation of these phenomena during the transition from pre-industrial to industrial city has largely marked the work of social and cultural historians interested in the urban sonic environment. Utilizing predominantly written and narrative sources, some of them, working on the early modern period, tried to reconstruct and explore the “past” soundscape of the city, i.e. the urban sonic environment and experience before the epochal changes of the industrial era¹⁰. Other researchers focused on the sonic experiences of the metropolitan industrial world, sound reproduction technology and the emergence of acoustic reformism and noise abatement campaigns¹¹. Last but not least, several urban historians have been interested in exploring and theorizing the very processes of transition to a “modern” urban sonic environment and imaginary and the various attitudes towards its transformation¹².

By showcasing the importance of sound for approaching and making sense of past societies, pioneer works in the history of sound effectively challenged the epistemological ocular-centrism dominant until the late twentieth century in the social sciences. The first, “militant” phase of this rehabilitation of sound in social and cultural history and the humanities soon provoked interesting critical dis-

⁹ Murray Shaffer, *The Soundscape*, p. 43 *et passim*.

¹⁰ For an exemplary study see D. Garrioch, Sounds of the City: the Soundscape of Early Modern European towns, *Urban History*, 2003, Vol. 30, p. 5-25. Cf. B. R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999.

¹¹ See among others: J. Sterne, *The Audible Past. Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham & London, Duke U.P., 2003; K. Bijsterveld, *Technology, Culture and Public Problems of Noise in the 20th Century*. MIT Press, 2008; E. Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity. Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America 1900-1933*. Boston, MIT Press, 2002, esp. p. 115-168.

¹² Ian Biddle, Madrid’s great sonic transformation: Sound, noise, and the auditory commons of the city in the nineteenth century, *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14636204.2019.1651611> - 25.06.2020; A. Boutin, *Paris. City of Noise*. Urbana Champaign, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign Press, 2017; J. Silva, Porosity and Modernity. Lisbon’s Auditory Landscape from 1864 to 1908, In: I. Biddle, K. Gibson (eds.) *Cultural Histories of Noise, Sound and Listening in Europe 1300-1918*. London, Routledge, 2017, p. 235-251; J. M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.

cussions¹³. Murray Schaffer's concept of the "soundscape" sparked critical debates concerning its analytical clarity and descriptive capacity. Criticizing the very notion of soundscape, Tim Ingold argued that when we listen to our surroundings, we do not hear a soundscape. For "[...] sound is not the object but the medium of our perception. It is what we hear *in*. Similarly, we do not see light but we see *in it*"¹⁴. Understood in this way, sound and light appear inseparable conditions of ordinary experience. This observation highlights the intersensoriality of experience, a dimension which has been particularly stressed in recent discussions¹⁵.

Indeed, sonic experience cannot be practically separated from other sensory experiences¹⁶. Or, to put it in other terms, this act of "separation" conducted by human consciousness presupposes and violates the intersensorial unity. Still, the reasons for this separation "operation" are worth exploring and, I would argue, that they are to a certain extent related to the specificities of sound. Not only do sound and listening convey information, enable communication and orientate in space and time; they also formulate "experiences" in particular ways¹⁷. The acoustic dimension of experience is not controllable or predictable (or is less so than the visual). It conveys the dynamics of motion and acceleration and produces strong emotional phenomena, agreeable or not. As it can consequently be annoying, suspicious, and conducive of subversion, it increasingly becomes, with the advent of modernity, an object of regulation, both legal and discursive. Without wishing to object the notion of intersensoriality, I regard the exploration of the acoustic

¹³ For a synopsis and a critical theoretical approach see Y. Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses. Human Experience, Memory and Affect*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, esp. p. 111-128. For a discussion in relation to the urban studies see among others: M. Adams, S. Guy (eds.), *City and the Senses, The Senses & Society*, Jul 2007 (special issue); J. Urry, *City Life and the Senses*, In: G. Bridge, S. Watson (eds.) *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*. London, John Wiley & Sons, 2012, p. 347-356.

¹⁴ T. Ingold, *Against Soundscape*, In: A. Carlyle (ed.) *Autumn leaves: sound and the environment in artistic practice*. Paris, Double Entendre, 2007, p. 11. For a critique of the concept's descriptive capacity see also J.-F. Augoyard, H. Torgue, *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds*. Montreal & London, McGill-Queen's University Press 2006, p. 7.

¹⁵ This approach would result to an untenable "singularization and compartmentalization of the sensorial", Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses*, p. 114.

¹⁶ This separation is effected only in extreme situations of detention, such as those in Saydnaya prison in Syria. J. E. K. Parker, *Sonic lawfare: on the jurisprudence of weaponised sound*, *Sound Studies*, 2019, 5 (1), p. 72-96: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20551940.2018.1564458> – 15.07.2020, p. 1-25.

¹⁷ J. Müller, „The Sound of Silence“. Von der Unhörbarkeit der Vergangenheit zur Geschichte des Hörens, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 292/1 (2011), s. 1–29.

experience of the cityscape, especially in the transition from pre-industrial to industrial city, as theoretically and methodologically important and would argue that it can offer important insights in the discussion of Balkan urban modernity. In this pursuit, I deem the answer to the question *what can we “hear”* from past cityscapes particularly important, not in terms of an aesthetic search for production and consumption of new experiences, neither, of course, as a search of “hard facts”, sounds allegedly existing irrespectively and prior to their being listened by culturally informed ears. The importance of this question lies in the fact that the materiality of the sonic environment and the factors which condition it do affect experience in a dialectical relationship with the agent of listening and hearing¹⁸.

Climate and built environment

The climate of a city is important, as shown by the climatic differences between the cities we study. Compared to the more continental and cold climate of Sofia and Belgrade, the dry and warm Mediterranean climate of Athens prolongs the duration of outdoor activities in the city space, thus critically affecting the acoustic communication between private and public space. The impression that surprised most the Russian group of students, who visited Athens in summer 1903 with their Moscow University professors, was “that the citizens lived outdoors, in the street”¹⁹. Similarly, the built environment is of great importance for conditioning the city acoustics and producing special sound effects²⁰. Sofia – sweepingly re-planned with Haussmanean-style wide boulevards – is described by the memoirists as a “quiet city”, even well into the twentieth century²¹. Arriving in 1905 from three times smaller Ruse at Sofia train station, Dimo Kazasov encountered “a wide valley at the sides of which there were irregularly thrown one-storey houses”.

¹⁸ For a similar approach on the history of the landscape see Π. Ματάλας, Σπάρτη. Η ιστορία ενός τοπίου και το τοπίο της ιστορίας, αδημοσίευτη διδ. διατριβή, Πανεπιστήμιο Κρήτης, Τμήμα Ιστορίας-Αρχαιολογίας, Ρέθυμνο, 2009, σ. 11-23. Cf. B. Brown, Thing theory, *Critical Inquiry*, 2001, Vol. 28, N 1, p. 1-22.

¹⁹ „Αι εντυπώσεις από την Ελλάδα των Ρώσων φοιτητών“, εφ. Χρόνος, Α', αρ. 19, 9-10-1903.

²⁰ For a very helpful guide on sounds in urban spaces see the result of the pioneering work of the CRESSON group at Grenoble see Augoyard, Torgue, *Sonic Experience*. For a discussion of these effects in the case of Lyon see O. Balaÿ, The Soundscape of a City in the Nineteenth Century, In: Biddle & Gibson, *Cultural Histories*, p. 221-234.

²¹ Π. Мирчев, *Κнига за София. Събития, слухки, спомени*. София, Отечествен фронт, 1979, с. 290-291.

Taking a coach to the center, he passed through the Lions' Bridge "where the picture was the same with that in front of the Station". He then moved to the "proper city" through the wide and dusty Maria Luiza boulevard, in which "there were small one- or two-storey houses, between which there were vacant plots". Behind the central "Mosque", he encountered "a vast and abandoned area". Reaching his hostel at Angel Kăncev street, he formed impression that "he had come to an abandoned city". Having been favorably predisposed by Sofia's beautiful hinterland and the mountain of Vitoshka, he described in one word the feeling he had after his first carriage route and his walk in the four main streets of Sofia: "Disappointment. Compared to the rich and neat port-city of Ruse, the capital city looked to me as a big, sad and unsightly city"²².

Similarly, fin-de siècle Belgrade has been described as an "unfinished city", with wide abandoned and vacant spaces. The main reason for this was, however, not destruction and sweeping re-planning of the city, but the exact opposite: high rents, urban taxes and speculation with urban land pushed the poorer inhabitants to the outskirts of the city limits, where they lived in newly formed semi-urban clusters. In 1903,²³ a contemporary observer remarked that Belgrade had expanded fivefold during the last 10 years, noting that this process "[...] will cost us dearly, as there are so many empty plots of land in the city, and the municipal plots are difficult to sell." He concluded that the authorities should finally put an end to this "depopulation" of Belgrade which, we may induce, affected not only the planning, but also the morphology of the city and its sonic environment²⁴. At the same time, contrary to Sofia, the old fabric was preserved in certain parts of the old Belgrade (*varoš*). From police records, we learn that some streets were narrow enough as to not allow the passage of people when a carriage stopped in the street for selling vegetables²⁵. These streets and parts of the city provided most probably the conditions for reverberation effects and more intense acoustic experiences. Athens, in turn, was endowed with modern city plans many decades earlier than the other two cities; yet it shared with Belgrade (and to a certain extent with Sofia too), the

²² Д. Казасов, *Улици, хора събития*. София през първите години на 20-ия век. София, Наука и изкуство, 1968, с. 11-13.

²³ See e.g. Расељаване Београда, *Мали Журнал*, 30-4-1910, in which Belgrade is characterized as the eternal (rural) town of Europe. In detail see Стојановић, *Калдрма и асфалт*.

²⁴ Архив града Београда, Записници, 1903, I, 21 март 1903, бр. 238, cited in D. Stojanović, Between rivalry, irrationality and resistance. The Modernization of Belgrade 1890-1914, In: Behrends, Kohlrausch, *Races to Modernity*, p. 165-166.

²⁵ See e.g. *Живети у Београду*, Т. I, с. 350.

slow rhythms of city plan implementation²⁶. Still, in the beginning of the twentieth century several central parts of the new city were densely built and not all central streets were sufficiently wide for alleviating the reverberation and mixing effects²⁷.

A systematic study of the sonic topography of the three cities in the above-mentioned period would probably lead to more safe conclusions concerning the impact on the urban soundscape by such processes as re-planning and re-building – evolving in varying ways and paces in each of the Balkan capitals. This study will identify the points of sonic “congestion”, shared by all three cities, their spread and connections in the city fabric. Even in relatively quiet Sofia, there were corners with intense noise effects in the 1910s. For instance, in the corner of Vitosha and Solunska streets, the great Bulgarian symbolist poet Pejo Javorov shot himself dead in October 1914 following the suicide of his beloved Lora Karavelova, in what was the end of a notorious love affair. Kunka, the daughter of his landlady, mistook initially the sound of the gunshot for that of a stone thrown to the window of the house by children playing in the street. As she declared, “the noise of the street diminished the effect of the gunshot”²⁸.

Natural and biological keynote sounds in urban settings

Another important variant of the city sound environment are the natural and biological sounds, which often form what Murray Schaffer called the “keynote sounds of a soundscape”, i.e. sounds forming a characteristic sonic background of a sonic environment²⁹. For example, the sounds of the Danube and Sava rivers, conveyed in the memoirs from the same roughly period, are a keynote sound of

²⁶ See in detail E. Μπαστέα, *Αθήνα 1834-1896. Νεοκλασσική πολιοδομία και εθνική συνείδηση*, Αθήνα, 2008.

²⁷ Stadiou street, for example, for the noise of which we have some of the most characteristic early 20th c. testimonies, was (and still is by current standards) not sufficiently wide for the “boulevard” functions it bore. See e.g. Χρόνος, Ε', αρ. 1453, 1-10-1907, σ. 2; Ακρόπολις, ΚΓ' / αρ. 6533, 18-6-1909 σ. 2; ΚΔ', αρ. 6728, 10-1-1910, σ. 4. We should note however that Athens (within the expanding city limits) has also a rather falling or stable population density in the period 1879-1907. Λ. Λεοντίδου, *Πόλεις της σιωπής. Εργατικός εποικισμός της Αθήνας και του Πειραιά, 1909-1940*, Αθήνα, ΠΙΟΠ, 1989, σ.83. For the reverberation and mixing effects see Augoyard, Torgue, *Sonic Experience*, p.77, 115-116.

²⁸ Χρ. Βρѐзицов, *Някога в София*. София, Български Писател, 1970, с. 15-16.

²⁹ R. Murray Shaffer, *The Soundscape. Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Vermont, Destiny Books, 1977, p. 17-42.

Belgrade, while the sounds of the port, the boat whistles and waterfront life create a particular sonic background and experience³⁰. Biological sounds, such as those of birds or other animals, can also be “keynote sounds” of a soundscape. Murray Schaffer offered beautiful examples of the “bird symphonies of the world” in various inhabited and uninhabited places³¹. Yet, bird sounds in the context of developing urban centers may form less “idyllic” experiences. Despite the specificities, there are interesting testimonies for the tense relationship of the dwellers and authorities of all three Balkan capital cities to biological sounds, especially to those of birds. Until 1885, one of the main roads of Athens, Stadiou street, had shadowy poplar trees. Following complaints of street residents that the birds’ tweeters “made them lose their quiescence”, the municipal authorities cut down the trees, an act condemned as a “crime” by the sensitive journalist of newspaper *Acropolis*³². In Belgrade and Sofia the problems with the birds were more serious. Aleksandr Deroko recalled the noise of the Belgrade’s daws (*čavki*) in the chestnut alleys in early twentieth century, becoming at times so annoying that the authorities employed hunters to shoot them, a spectacle that he remembered as a great attraction³³. In Sofia, the municipal council accepted the proposal of the known merchant and national revival activist Nikola Tupchileshtov, appointed in 1881 as city commissioner, to have the jackdaws (*gargi*) of Sofia exterminated, “[...] in order to relieve the population from the annoyance to hear the hated crowing of these birds with the aim to clean and arrange well the city”. The council would pay the citizens 20 paras for each jackdaw head delivered to them, but prohibited shooting within the city confines proposing other methods of extermination (such as traps, among others)³⁴. Despite these efforts, the sound of jackdaws remained a key sound of the city, as the memoirists testify, at least until the first decades of the twentieth century³⁵.

³⁰ *Београд у сећањима 1900-1918*. Београд, 1977, с. 23-25 *et passim*.

³¹ Shaffer, *The Soundscape*, p. 31-34.

³² *Ακρόπολις*, ΣΤ', αρ. 1108, 16-4-1885.

³³ А. Дероко, Београд на сусрету два века, Ип: Ђоковић, Милан (ур.) *Београд у сећањима 1900 – 1918*. Београд, Српски књижевна задруга, 1977, с. 33.

³⁴ Държавен Архив София, ф. 1 „Софийско градско управление“, а.е. 23, Журнално постановление № 2, 17 Януарий 1881 г., л. 52- 53.

³⁵ Мирчев, *Книга за София*.

Ethnoreligious soundmarks and cultural intolerance

The same Nikola Tupchileshtov also cared for “cleaning” the city’s soundscape from another “scourge”, displaying a characteristic attitude of at least a part of the bourgeois elites of Balkan nation-states, which we could define as “sonic de-orientalization”. Having been a long-time resident of the Ottoman capital, Tăpchileshtov proposed to the city council to prohibit oriental music and dance in the streets of Sofia (the so-called *kioček*) because “...they disseminate immorality and they are not compatible with the spirit of the (modern) times”³⁶. Again, music in public spaces continued to be a field of contestation until the first decades of 20th century: in Maria Luisa Boulevard, military bands, šop folk orchestras, gipsy bands and Turkish *kioček* performed by Bulgarian men and women were still competing for audiences³⁷. On the other hand, at the end of the century Sofia was the only one of the three Balkan capitals with Turkish population practicing publically their cult, posing in this way the question of the presence of Muezzin’s “oriental” *ezan* in the city center’s soundscape.

These soundmarks of cultural alterity and its public presence in the urban space were absent in fin-de siècle Belgrade and Athens. Belgrade, in particular, had a very different and interesting story of ethnoreligious sonic antagonism between bells and muezzins during the dual Ottoman-Serbian rule (1817-1867)³⁸. The first efforts for church bell ringing at Belgrade in 1829 were opposed with threats of violence and were prohibited by the local Ottoman authorities³⁹. One year later, the threats of the Muslim population, to a large extent a product of fear and insecurity, were repeated: “It is not acceptable to read the ezan and ring the bells in one and the same place”⁴⁰. Prince Miloš succeeded eventually to curve this resistance by bribing Hussein Pasha according to the testimony of the local Muslim bureau-

³⁶ ДА София, ф. 1 „Софийско градско управление“, а.е. 23, постановление № 12, 13-6-1880, л. 28.

³⁷ Казасов, *Улицу*, с. 35.

³⁸ For the antagonism between church bells and muezzins see A. Lyberatos, Time and Timekeeping in the Balkans. Representations and Realities, In: R. Daskalov et al. (eds.) *Entangled history of the Balkans*, vol. IV. Leiden, Brill, 2017, p. 268-278. For similar concerns in the context of colonial management of cultural diversity see R. Pekka Pennanen, Cannons, Church Bells and Colonial Policies. The Soundscape in Habsburg Bosnia-Herzegovina, In: Biddle, Gibson, *Cultural Histories*, p. 152-166.

³⁹ Алекса Симић Кнезу Милошу, 10 фебр 1829, In: Б. Перуничић, *Београдски суд 1819-1839*. Београд, Историјски архив, 1964, с. 425-426.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 455.

crat and chronicler Rašid bey⁴¹. The withdrawal of Belgrade's Muslim population after 1867 ended a period of coexistence of bells and ezans, leaving the sound of the former as the only ethnoreligious soundmark in the completely "christianized" capital of autonomous Serbia. Similarly to Belgrade, fin-de-siecle Athens lacked a Mosque; its Muslim population had already left the city as a result of the Greek War of Independence. However, the question of "Oriental vs. Western music" in public spaces was probably more perplexed in Athens than in Sofia, due to the influence of the Orthodox Church and the strong ties to Istanbul and Anatolia, which a good part of the Greeks maintained⁴².

Street vendors: nostalgia and nuisance

Another common theme of human generated sound in all three cities is that of market sounds and especially the voices of peddlers. These distinctively appear as nice sonic experiences in memoirs and literary texts, deeply engraved in the authors' minds and usually imbued with nostalgia. Recalling the peddlers passing from Molerova street in Vračar, Mata Milošević remembers the sounds: "The vendors, in folk Macedonian dress, were shouting with loud voices: "yoooghurt" (*mleeeeko čiselo*). It seems to me that I hear them now! I hear also others, for example: "ice bozaa" (*boza ledenaaaa*)⁴³. Likewise, Rajna Kostenčeva lively recalls the itinerant boza vendors' cry "bozai, wonderful bozai" (*bozaai, chudo bozaaaai*), in order to remember the use of the sound of the letter "er goliam" (Ъ) at the end, noting how their cry resembled a chant⁴⁴. Alexandros Papadiamantis records the mournful voice of the salep beverage vendor, which scared the roosters making them hush: "Hot! It Boils" (*Zesto! Vrazei!*)⁴⁵. The examples are numerous. The ones mentioned here are perfect examples of the centrality of the sensory dimen-

⁴¹ Н. Макуљевић, *Османо-српски Београд: визуелност и креиране градског идентитета (1815-1878)*. Београд, Тору, 2015, с. 126. Cf. М. Пауновић, *Београд вечити град*. Београд, Н.У. "Светозар Марковић", 1968, с. 428.

⁴² A very indicative example were the serious conflicts caused in Athens by the eventually failed efforts to introduce western (syncopated) harmony singing in the Orthodox liturgy. See e.g. Ακρόπολις, ΙΕ', αρ. 5075, 25-3-1896, σ. 2 & ΙΖ', αρ. 5770, 1-4-1898, σ. 4.

⁴³ М. Милошевић, „Дечаштво у Молеровој улици“, *Београд у сећањима*, с. 157.

⁴⁴ Р. Костенцева, *Моят роден град Софија в края на XIX – началото на XX век и след това*. Софија, Рива, 2008, с. 66.

⁴⁵ Α. Παπαδιαμάντης, „Ο ξεπεσμένος δερβίσης“, *Αθηναϊκά διηγήματα*, Αθήνα, 24 γράμματα, 2018, σ. 73.

sion of memory, “inseparable from the live film of a city”, as Nadia Seremetakis nicely put it⁴⁶.

However, the picture painted by the memoirs and literary texts can be very misleading. Athenian newspapers, for example, are full of references to the voices of peddlers, though they are less unanimous and idyllic than those in the memoirs. In fact, we can discern important variations, trends and shifts. In 1883, the newspaper *Acropolis* was asked by some readers to publicize their complaints against the salep vendors shouting as early as 2 am in Agios Konstantinos central neighborhood, in hope that the police prohibition of such shouting before 6 am would be enforced. The journalist had mixed feelings, noting that “[...] it is so hedonic, instead of the rooster’s cries, to listen to this “saleeepi, zestooo einai, oily as the product being sold”⁴⁷. All subsequent references of the newspaper *Acropolis* to the peddlers’ voices until the end of the century were rather neutral or even positive. One encounters among them interesting comments about street vendors’ functioning as temporal soundmarks in a soundscape still characterized by “high fidelity”: “This is the time of the figs. In the streets of Athens, despite the prohibitions by the police, their maturity is being praised by vendor cries, marking, together with that of the grapes, the advent of autumn”⁴⁸. An article from 1901 discerns a trend towards “vocal civilization”, as among the wild shouts of their colleagues, increasingly more peddlers shouted “with pliant, soft and lissome voices”⁴⁹. This is probably a turning point in time, an effort to defend the peddlers in a period of frequenting complaints against them. Two days later the same newspaper publishes an anecdote about an old man responding furiously to being disturbed by the peddlers’ voices during his midday siesta⁵⁰. Two months later, a short comment in the same newspaper shows that the animosity against peddlers could be also economically related. In a period of acute crisis of the Greek currant economy, the

⁴⁶ N. Σερεμετάκη, „Η άλλη πόλη της σιωπής – Σεισμός και πέτρινα σώματα της ιστορίας“, *Νέα Κοινωνιολογία*, 2006-7, 43, 37-53, σ. 41, cited in Πούλος, „Απόηχοι“, σ. 197.

⁴⁷ *Ακρόπολις*, Δ', αρ. 642, 17-12-1883, σ. 2.

⁴⁸ *Ακρόπολις*, Ε', αρ. 851, 18-8-1884, σ. 1. The same applies to the boza vendors in Belgrade and Sofia and the salep or roasted chestnut sellers. For the distinction of pre-modern/rural “high-fidelity” vs. modern urban/low fidelity soundscape see Schaffer, *Our Sonic Environment*.

⁴⁹ *Ακρόπολις*, ΙΗ', αρ. 6942, 27-6-1901, σ. 1.

⁵⁰ *Ακρόπολις*, ΙΗ', αρ. 6944, 29-6-190, σ. 1. The old man in the story was approached by a beggar who asked him for alms because “he had lost his voice”. He got “mad” when he learned that the man asking for help was not a singer, but a greengrocer.

newspaper criticized the (illegal) grape vendors shouting in Athinas street during the night, and those who buy cheap grapes from them⁵¹.

In the next years (1902 & 1903), the beggars and their “awful, whining voices” were added to the incoming peasants (grape, must or chestnut vendors) as targets of complaints⁵². Soon, the orientalist discourse condemning the wild and harsh cries in the capital city of a kingdom that aspired to “civilize the East” exporting European civilization was also employed. In a “nice letter”, as characterized by the newspaper, a reader, most probably annoyed by the illegal competition of petty-traders, remarks: “In Europe, the voices and sounds disturbing the citizens are strictly prohibited. Every neighborhood has its shops, where they are sold. The peddlers are a rare phenomenon (!), and in any case they are not allowed to shout”⁵³. Eventually, in the second half of the 1900s and until the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, disturbance by street vendors becomes a central theme in the city news. I glean just a couple of quotations from the newspaper *Hronos* (Time), predominantly addressed to a petty-bourgeois audience. One afternoon of May 1907, the journalist was waken up by the “unbearable scream of the ice-seller”: “I suppose you remember this short, podgy person, dry and sun-burned like a cigarette butt...”⁵⁴. The three *băz* (a cold drink-lemonade based on *lampranthus spectabilis*) sellers competed one day of May 1908 with their wild cries in the market street “[...] giving pleasure to the loafers and disgust to the bypassing citizens”⁵⁵. In other short notices, the citizens are warned against the quality of lemonades sold to their children and the dangers from “exploding” lemonade bottles⁵⁶. Often enough, the police is called to intervene and stop e.g. the “screaming voice of children selling all day vegetables in all tones and verses”, which are dangerous for the “nerves of the citizens”⁵⁷.

⁵¹ Ακρόπολις, ΙΗ', αρ. 6995, 19-08-1901, σ. 1. For the currant cultivation and exports and their significance for 19th c. Greek economy see S. Permezas, Growth and Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean During the First Globalization: A view from Greece, In: A. Y. Kaya, A. Sabuktay, D. Akyalçin Kaya (eds.) *History Culture and Politics in the Mediterranean. The need for a plural and diverse unity*. Symposium Papers, n.p., 2016, p. 75-84.

⁵² See e.g. Ακρόπολις, 3-10-1902, 1-5-1903.

⁵³ Ακρόπολις, Κ', αρ. 8012, 23-6-1904, σ. 4.

⁵⁴ Χρόνος, Δ', αρ. 1309, 9-5-1907, σ. 2.

⁵⁵ Χρόνος, Ε', αρ. 1678, 27-5-1908, σ. 2.

⁵⁶ Χρόνος, Δ', αρ. 1300, 30-4-1907, σ. 2 & Χρόνος, Ε', αρ. 1680, 29-5-1908, σ. 2.

⁵⁷ Χρόνος, Θ', αρ. 3122, 1-6-1912, σ. 2.

Machines or men? Modernity and sonic “sensitivity”

The above-mentioned examples from Athens’ newspapers show that in the beginning of the twentieth century sound became a social issue, discussed widely in the public sphere in the biggest of the three Balkan capitals examined in this paper. A preliminary search in the Bulgarian and Serbian press of the period did not reveal any comparable phenomenon, leading to the hypothesis that this might have happened later, during the interwar period. In all three capitals, however, early twentieth century is a period of increasing appearance of mechanical sounds and noise in the cityscape, produced predominantly by electric trams and motorcars⁵⁸. Occasionally one comes across such comments as the following about Sofia and the noise of trams, though the latter was often produced by the passengers themselves: “The most noisy and unworthy was the situation of the tram in Kniazhevo, especially on Sundays. Despite the incessant mockery by the cartoonists depicting the tram with thousands of ears, the situation was not getting better...” This was so at least not after World War I and the modernization of the lines by the mayor of the city, Georgi Madzharov (1925)⁵⁹. However, most mechanical sounds, especially those of the railway or the factories, were initially received positively as landmarks of progress and civilization. Telling is Ivan Vazov’s story about the blind Old (Diado) Yotso who eventually “sees” the progress of liberated Bulgaria through the sound of the train arriving to his place. Indeed, it is emblematic of the positive attitude of Balkan intellectual elites towards mechanization⁶⁰. In 1885 Athens, at a time when mechanized factories were still rather scarce, the journalist of *Acropolis* who visited the factories of nearby Piraeus praised the industrial sounds: “The clang of the hammer, the whistling of the steam, the thud of the piston, are the most brilliant concert, the most triumphant march, which accompanies and stimulates man in the campaign of civilization”⁶¹.

⁵⁸ One should not underestimate, however, the noise produced by non-mechanized horse-carriages or horse-drawn tram coaches. For Belgrade and Sofia electrification and electric tramways see Велинова, Начев, *София и балканската модерност*, с. 173-183.

⁵⁹ Бръзицов, *Някога в София*, с. 62-3.

⁶⁰ И. Вазов, Дядо Йоцо гледа, В: *Събрани съчинения*, Т. VIII. София, Български писател, 1976.

⁶¹ Ακρόπολις, ΣΤ', αρ. 1162, 4-8-1885, σ.1. The question of removing industrial activities from the residential areas of the city is discussed in only one article of *Acropolis* towards the end of the period under consideration. It seems that it becomes really an issue after the 1920s. The case of Piraeus, which had a much bigger concentration of factories, is of course different. See Ν. Ποταμιάνος, Η παραδοσιακή μικροαστική τάξη της Αθήνας. Μαγαζάτορες και

Trams and motorcars did cause nuisance in early twentieth century. However, this was not so much due to their noise but rather other matters, such as accidents. For example, very soon after the Terazije-Topchider electric tramway started its operation in Belgrade in 1904, it hit and dragged a carriage at the corner Kral Milan and Dvorska street wounding its driver; a couple of days later newspaper *Politika* published the news about an Italian scientist who proved that the tramway wires emit ozone and are harmful of the public health⁶². Cars appeared increasingly in the Athenian streets in the first decade of the century, but their number did not exceed 40 to 50 until the Balkan Wars, according to a reasonable estimation⁶³. Consequently, the comments in the press put the accent less on the noise problem they created, and more on the conspicuous use of them as an instrument of class hegemony. The luxurious car at the central market street (Ermou) in 1903 is described ascending with “kingly slowness”. It did not disturb the shopping ladies with the “light noises” it was making, but with its horn, declaring “ironically” that “[...] my lady owner is the best of all of you”⁶⁴. The first accidents after 1907, some of them by members of the royal family and the governing elite, led to a greater frequency of car-related comments, employing technophobic discourses focusing on the question of “safety” or discussing class differences⁶⁵. Similarly, despite the fact that “they ring and wake up people” in their trial routes, in 1908 the newspaper *Hronos* presses the owner of the new electric trams to introduce them without delay, not leaving any longer the people to be transported by the “old and scabby horses” of the old times⁶⁶. Even in the very few other indirect mentions (as in the case of the Tram drivers strikes of 1909 & 1911), the tramway’s noise was accepted as a necessary and unavoidable annoyance. It almost sounded like the recurring references to the steamrollers, straightening the streets or covering them with asphalt. Consequently, we could reach the provisional conclusion that, dur-

βιοτέχνες 1880-1925, διδακτορική διατριβή, Πανεπιστήμιο Κρήτης, 2011, σ. 55-56, 62; Cf. X. Αγγριαντώνη, „Η Αθήνα“, σ. 123.

⁶² Политика, бр. 48, 28-2-1904, с. 3; бр. 51, 2-3-1904, с. 3.

⁶³ X. Καραμπάτσος, „Η Ευφροσύνη διασχίζει τη λεωφόρο Συγγρού. Η εισαγωγή του αυτοκινήτου, η μάχη για το χώρο και ο „Βενιζελικός εκσυγχρονισμός“ στην Ελλάδα των αρχών του εικοστού αιώνα“, In: Σ. Αραποστάθης κ.α. (επιμ.), *Τεχνολογία και κοινωνία στην Ελλάδα. Μελέτες από την Ιστορία της Τεχνολογίας και τις Σπουδές Επιστήμης και Τεχνολογίας*, Αθήνα, 2015, σ. 152.

⁶⁴ Χρόνος, Α', αρ. 46, 5-11-1903, σ.1, „Υπό το φώς“.

⁶⁵ On the topic and the “struggle for the control of the streets” see in detail Καραμπάτσος, „Η Ευφροσύνη“.

⁶⁶ Χρόνος Ε>, αρ. 1761 19-8-1908, σ. 2 „Ας αρχίσει τέλος πάντων“.

ing the early twentieth-century transitional phase, the discussion of mechanical noise abatement was still marginal not only in the smaller and generally quieter Bulgarian and Serbian capitals, but also in larger and noisier city of Athens.

This is not however the case with the music producing mechanical devices. Phonographs, music boxes and lanterns, to which so nostalgically the memoirists would later refer, become very quickly objects of great animosity in Athenian press. Phonographs, a technological achievement exciting curiosity and admiration upon its arrival in the Balkans at the turn of the century⁶⁷, was also used in coffee shops and the streets of Athens by itinerant entertainers. However, by 1908 they “become unbearable”, playing the same records with “hoarse voices”⁶⁸. The barrel organs, originally a Bavarian invention also used in the streets of Athens, are called a barbarism, products of “Barbaria”⁶⁹. At the same time, a series of articles and short notes aggressively complain of itinerant musicians of all sorts, not only the familiar ones like “Marinos, the sawer of the Athenians’ ears”, but a multitude of others regarded more or less as beggars. According to a journalist, this “Phonograph and Co.,” comprising of peddlers and various musicians “with wind and string instruments” even “with *gajdas*”, inundate the city: “Imagine also how it is to pay for having your ears torn”!⁷⁰

In 1909, another journalist makes references to both sounds of trams and of musicians. He regards the fuzzy noise of tram coaches reaching his office as “a banal concert”, noting how it had nearly become necessary for one in order to feel calm. He is, however, angered with so many people “seeking to live at the expense of the nervous system” of their fellow citizens. “These various musicians make a living. There is however no man who is not disturbed by the lantern, affected by the barrel organ or get irritated by the phonograph. As for the one who mimics the nightingale, he deserves to be killed”⁷¹. Another article on the eve of the Balkan Wars, conveys the obsessive (and desperate) side of the phenomenon by speaking of Athens as “a city of music maniacs”!⁷² The usual refrain of all these comments

⁶⁷ See e.g. Πολιτικά, βρ. 1, στρ. 2, 12-1-1904, “Κραλέβ Φονογραφ”.

⁶⁸ Χρόνος, Ε', αρ. 1723, 11-7-1908, σ. 1.

⁶⁹ Χρόνος, Ζ', αρ. 2158, 25-9-1909, σ. 2.

⁷⁰ Χρόνος, Α', αρ. 157, 7-6-1904, σ. 1. „Φωνόγραφος & Σία“.

⁷¹ Χρόνος, ΣΤ', αρ. 1997, 16-4-1909, σ. 1.

⁷² Χρόνος, Θ', αρ. 3108, 18-5-1912, σ. 2. The comparison with the relaxed (*rahatli*) peddlers and generally the quiet nights of newly occupied Thessaloniki at the end of 1912 is telling: “These people do not advertise their goods with those voices that the Athens’ peddlers make and deafen the people”. Χρόνος, Ι', αρ. 3304, 1-12-1912.

was the need of energetic policing and enforcement of regulations and prohibitions, which would defend “public tranquility”.

The study of the press shows that the problem in early twentieth-century Athens was not so much the proper mechanical “sounds of modernity”, as the human made noises – with or without the help of sound reproducing technologies: peddlers, musicians, as well as the phonograph or music box entertainers. Various discourses certainly mediated and cultivated the increasing sensitivity recorded in the press, reaching expressions of extreme intolerance. Close to the usual themes of Europeanization and civilization “suffering” from the activities of these noisy agents, the medical discourse on mental health and neurasthenia is probably the most interesting, as seen in the last couple of citations. The formation of these discourses and the question of the transmission, diffusion and reception of ideas about hearing, sound and noise certainly need more detailed investigation. At the same time, it seems that the increasing complaints and aggressive comments were also responding to acute social tensions expressed materially on the sonic environment of the city. In a recent and most interesting article about the novel of Milutin Uskoković *Newcomers (Došliaci)*, published in 1910 and taking place in Belgrade, Miloš Jovanović has shown how the dusty and muddy roads of the “unfinished capital” were experienced by young aspiring bourgeois intellectuals as a nightmare, a symbol of frustrated modernization in the periphery of global capital flows⁷³. In Athens, the threat to intellectual or petty-bourgeois aspirations was probably experienced mainly aurally, as an urban sonic dystopia. And as a sonic experience, it was more dynamic and had more identifiable agents, probably some other “Došliaci”, for instance the incoming rural poor, some on their way to America, trying to make a living and, in a sense, waging their own sonic class struggle in the urban soundscape. The full exploration of this peculiar conflict and its context, as well as other similar issues related to the sonic and intersensorial experiences in the undergoing social transformation of Balkan cities of the first half of the twentieth century will be the object of further research.

⁷³ M. Jovanović, Bourgeois worlds and urban nightmares: The post-Ottoman city through the lens of Milutin Uskoković's *Newcomers*, *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies*, Vol. 5 N 2 (2018), p. 187-206.

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Andreas Lyberatos

Institute for Mediterranean Studies/ FORTH
& Panteion University
136, Syngrou Av., 17671 Athens
Greece
lyberatos@gmail.com

DREAMING CONSTANTINOPLE: AN ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF PETKO TODOROV AND NIKOLAY RAYNOV

Nikolay Aretov

Abstract: *Constantinople has a key place in Bulgarian national mythology. In many texts (folklore, chronicles, literature), it is presented as a great city that had to be seized or that was conquered by alien infidels. Petko Todorov and Nikolay Raynov, two important writers from the early 20th century, introduced an alternative version of the attitude towards the capital of the Byzantine Empire. In it, the Bulgarian ruler King Simeon refuses to subdue the city because they do not want history to recollect them as barbarians and destroyers. Such an attitude could not be interpreted as dominant or representative for its time. Nevertheless, it suggests the existence of some overtones in the overall image of the city and directs towards an ambivalent interpretation of Constantinople in the imagination of the Bulgarians.*

Keywords: *Constantinople, Petko Todorov, Nikolay Raynov, Alternative Version*

The siege or seizure of an important, even holy city, is a well-known historical event that gives rise to multiple interpretations in different texts. There are numerous examples: the fall of Babylon (Isaiah, Ch. 13; there is a similar chronicle narrative of the conquerors – the Assyrian king Sargon II), of Troy, of Jericho (Joshua, ch. 3-8), of Jerusalem, with the temple of Solomon (conquered sequentially by Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Romans, featured by Flavius Josephus; next came the Persians, the Crusaders and Saladin's Saracens), of Rome, much later of Vienna (1529, 1683) besieged by Suleiman the Magnificent, etc. No doubt, there are such legendary narratives about the Far East and pre-Columbian America as well.

There are several types of battles for a city, the division being based on at least two indicators: whose city it is – our own or alien; what kind of a siege it is –

successful or not. The positioning of the own–alien axis may vary, particularly in interpretations of later periods, as in the case of Troy, readily claimed as their own by various nationalisms. On the other hand, the epochal event may not fit into the standard victory–defeat opposition, as is the case with the invasion of Moscow in L. Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, etc. The matter is only seemingly reduced to the question of who the narrator is: the vindicator or the assailant of the city, the victor or the defeated; there are texts, where authors from the circles of the aggressors can sympathize with the besieged, admire them, and so on. Examples to the contrary can also be found, i.e. of chroniclers from the attacked city experiencing similar, rather positive feelings for the attackers. In fact, beneath the surface of the openly stated loyalty to one’s own kind, the attitude to the other is generally ambivalent.

Quite often the city is seen as a symbol of civilization, while the invaders are portrayed as barbarians. This does not entail any mandatory connotations – naturally, a civilization is a value, but it can also be seen as having passed its zenith, as declining, overly sophisticated and corrupt. Conversely, barbarians can be portrayed as bearers of renewal and vitality. Such a point of view is actually typical of the fundamental radical, revolutionary ideologies.

As a rule, narratives of important events seek analogies in the past. In this sense, the conquest of the City can be seen as an important element of various mythical structures with an apocalyptic, heroic or traumatic plot. Even when sieges fail, they are interpreted in different ways that change in the course of time. Generally speaking, stories of sieges and conquests in different cities can be regarded as a peculiar network of texts, where each of the nodes can be linked to the others and all, albeit to varying degrees, can be related to similar earlier events and to some common archetype. This network engages in some kind of relationship with a closely positioned network of texts about major battles.

Since time immemorial Constantinople has held a special position for the Bulgarians. As a rule, it has been more of an alien city, but in certain cases it may seem as their own. Like any big city, it is both a seat of evil (even a dwelling place of evil powers) and debauchery, but also a repository of treasures and a site of subtle pleasures. Such a point of view is generally proper to aliens, to barbarians, be they newcomers or indigenous people from the city surroundings.

Constantinople was “alien”, when Simeon “arrived” at its gates from the northwest, or during the First Balkan War, and more of “our own” when the Ot-

tomans appeared from the southeast. The example of the Battle of Pleven (1877)¹, for instance, is another way to show the relativity of the notions of “one’s own” and “alien”: the Bulgarian national mythology and historiography definitely qualify as “our own” the besiegers, who were aggressors anyway, and as “alien” the defenders of the city that belonged to the regular army of the attacked state, to which “our own” people belonged at that time for better or worse.

Apropos, the attitude of the Turks towards Constantinople and its seizure was also dynamic and not quite unambiguous. In his work *Istanbul. Memories and the City* Orhan Pamuk wrote a special small chapter entitled “Conquest or Fall? The Turkification of Constantinople”.

For Westerners, May 29, 1453, is the Fall of Constantinople while for Easterners it’s the Conquest of Istanbul. (...) When my wife was studying at Columbia University, she used the word *conquest* in an exam and her American professor accused her of nationalism. (...) Because her mother was of Russian extraction, it could be said that her sympathies were more with the Orthodox Christians².

Further on in the book, Pamuk also presents the fluctuation in the attitude of the official policy vis-à-vis the event, as well as the excesses against the Christians in 1955, which he indirectly associated with the conquest of the city.

* * *

The attacks of the Bulgarians against Constantinople have been present in modern Bulgarian poetry since the time of Nayden Gerov and his poem *Brave King Thunder (Podiril e hrabriy tsar Gram)*, a work unpublished during the author’s lifetime:

Summary: King Thunder (Tsar Gram), seeking a victory against the Greeks, chased them to the golden gates of Istanbul, where he built a camp. The intimidated citizens of Istanbul flocked to balconies, walls and towers, and as they saw

¹ Somewhat paradoxically, the Ottoman point of view about it also appeared in Bulgarian about twenty years later. See *Отбраната на Плевен по официални и частни документи, събрани под ръководството на мюшира Гази Осман паша, от дивизионния генерал Музаффер паша, адютант на Н.И.В. Султана и подполковника от ген. щаб Талъят бей, адютант на мюшир Гази Осман паша*. Превод на Д. Х. Иванов и К. Козловски, запасен полковник. София, 1901.

² Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul. Memories and the City*. New York, Knopf, 2017, p. 232.

the King among his troops mounted on horseback, they prayed to God, offered animals as sacrifice and wailed that Constantinople would be conquered³.

³ Подирил е
храбрий цар Гръм
гърци да ги бие.
Де ги свари
и удари,
все ще им надвие.
За ги гони,
та е стигнал
дор до Цариграда,
стан настанил
в ляговище
из-пред златните врата.
Наплашени
Цареградци,
като чтом са чули,
затекли са
по чердаци,
по стени, по кули.
Кога гледат
цар с войска
богом си ся моли
и добитък
ведно с людяе
на молитва коли.
като гори
молитвата
дим клъба ся вдига
и кадило в сине небо
до бога достига.
...
А цар яхнал
врана коня,
из войска ходи,
ряд ги ряди
въз Цариград
в поляз да ги води.
Заплакало,
заврякало, в града старо, младо:
Леле, варе,
мила мале,
зеха Цариграда!

Из: *Българска възрожденска поезия*. Подбор и ред, К. Топалов. София, Български писател, 1980.

In this case, the name Thunder (Gram) is a reference to Khan Krum, while in other cases the role of the attacker is given to King Simeon. Ivan Vazov's poem *King Simeon (There is Clamour by the Bosphorus) (Tsar Simeon – Kray Bosfora shum se vdiga)* first published in the verse collection *Poems for Young Children (Stibotvoreniya za malki detsa)* (Plovdiv, 1883) has been quite popular to this very day, particularly as a song. The author of the popular tune was Emanuil Manolov (1860–1902); the song, written down in notes, was first published in the *Nightingale Forests (Slaveevi gori)* children's music library (issues 1–12. Kazanlak, 1899–1900).

The reverie of Constantinople was also manifested in a specific way in the national anthem of the young Principality, subsequently Kingdom of Bulgaria: *Maritsa Babbles (Shumi Maritsa)*. As is known, it is based on Nikola Zhivkov's poem *Chernyaev March (Chernyaev marsh)*, which, after a revision, assumed its popular form and was first published in a version provided by Vazov in the *Peace (Mir)* magazine (1912) and later on in the collection of poems entitled *Under the Thunder of Victories (Pod garma na pobedite)* (1914)⁴. An unofficial version with the verse "Constantinople is Ours" inserted in the chorus also appeared⁵. Similar motifs are also present in other poems included in Vazov's collection *Under the Thunder of Victories (Pod garma na pobedite)*, *Three Fortresses (Tri kreposti)*, *Simeon at the Sea of Marmara (Simeon pri Mramorno more)*, *How About Constantinople? (A Tsarigrad?)* etc., related to the victorious battles in the Balkan Wars⁶. Stefan L. Kostov, known primarily as a comedy playwright, is also the author of the historical drama *Simeon* (1929).

Krum, Simeon, Kaloyan, and not only they, set off for Constantinople, but failed to conquer it. They translated into action the dream of (a part of) the Bulgarians vis-à-vis the great city and capital of the millennial empire. The dream of the big city was a lasting one both among rulers, poets and writers, and among artists as well (Dimitar Gyudzhenov, Simeon Velkov, Nikola Kozhuharov, Mincho Nikiforov, Ivan Slavov, Georgi Mashev, Tsvyatko Dimchevski, Tsanko Lavrenov'

⁴ Ив. Вазов, *Събрани съчинения в двайсет и два тома*. Т. 4, София, Български писател, 1976.

⁵ Н. Пътова, *Драматургия на българското: Националната идентичност във възрожденската драма*. София, Кралица Маб, 2012, с. 122.

⁶ А. Хранова, *Историография и литература. За социалното конструиране на исторически понятия и Големи разкази в българската култура. XIX-XX век*, Т. 1. София, Просвета, 2011, с. 170, 173-3.

etc.)⁷. The publicists revisiting the theme of the marches of the Bulgarian troops to Constantinople on every jubilee occasion are not second to them either. One can also add to them the textbook authors, as well as St. Tsanev, who has portrayed Simeon as suffering from insomnia and reiterating to himself, “I must conquer Constantinople!”

Simeon stayed on for a while, wondered at his thought, went to bed, but could not fall asleep again, as the predatory bird continued to peck at his mind, “I must conquer Constantinople!”

From that moment onwards, that thought never left Simeon’s mind and governed all his actions to his last day: “I must conquer Constantinople!”⁸

The list can be extended. There is no doubt that this is the image of Constantinople that has dominated the Bulgarian cultural space.

In the works of Vazov, and probably in those of others, as well, there is a particular nuance: the belief on the part of his *chichovtsi* (*uncles*), and to a certain extent on his part as well, that Constantinople was destined to be conquered by Russia. Which, in this context, to a certain extent implied that it was destined to be conquered by us as well. This is evidenced by authorities such as Martin Zadek (referred to as Martin Zadekat) and Khomyakov⁹.

The fall of Constantinople is also present in Bulgarian folk legends, where the invaders frequently turn out to be Bulgarians. These texts seem to be free of the pathos and heroization of “our own ones”, and the emphasis may prove to be shifted to the current Bulgarian-Greek argument. 19th century memoirists testify to the entwinement of such legends in the disputes between Bulgarians and Greeks at that time. N. Nachov recounted the following:

Many people know the legend that allegedly in the old days the Bulgarians set out to conquer Constantinople with clubs, but they were defeated and their clubs were collected as a military trophy in a museum. If any of them rotted, it was replaced by a new one of the same type. The legend provides no clue as to when that happened: in Byzantine or Turkish times. This legend is old and quite popular. I also heard it narrated far back in my childhood. I guess it is a Greek fable seeking

⁷ Ив. Богданов, *Симеон Велики. Епоха и личност*. София, Народна просвета, 1974.

⁸ Ст. Цанев, *Български хроники*, Т. 1. София, Труд, 2006, с. 212-230.

⁹ Ив. Вазов, *Събрани съчинения в двадесет тома*, Т. 5. София, Български писател, 1956, с. 250 sq. See also Хранова, *Историография и литература*, с. 406.

to ridicule the simple Bulgarians. P. R. Slaveykov also refers to the same legend in the *Periodical Magazine of the Bulgarian Literary Society* IX 122 (*Psp.* IX 122), but he adds that this was said about the Shoppes (native population of the Sofia district), that in order to defeat them, the Greeks got them drunk, and that there was talk that their clubs were allegedly kept at Yedi Kule. He says that this was all a hoax. Furthermore, the Greeks mockingly said that when the simple Bulgarians first saw the sea and fish in it, they screamed, "Fish soup, fish soup!"... and then they took out their spoons and started sipping seawater. And to this the Bulgarians objected that when the Bulgarian invaders dipped in the sea their *tsarvuli* (traditional Bulgarian pigskin footwear) that had become stiff during the long journey, the Greeks took them for an octopus and willingly set about to collect them. Interestingly, the same dispute was underway as early as in the 1835-1836 period at the Greek school in the Kuruçeşme neighbourhood (in Constantinople) between G. S. Rakovski and his Greek schoolmates (*garcheta*)¹⁰.

Nachov's source of the information about Rakovski's disputes with the young Greeks (*garcheta*) was the autobiography of S. Dobroplodni¹¹. However, the legend published by P. R. Slaveykov was somewhat different and there the city was attacked by Turks, and not by Bulgarians:

The admirable temple of the Holy Mother of God is close to Yedi Kule. There is a holy spring at it, which can be reached by going down two stone staircases, one on each side. There are also fish in the water. The name Balaklie, popular among the public, originated from the Turkish word *balık* (fish). On Bright (Easter) Friday a huge fair took place there. In the old days Grandpa Nacho used to recount, in a most serious manner, the following story about the fish in the tanks: they had been there for a very long time. When the Turks conquered Constantinople, messengers came running and reported this to King Constantine. He was really stunned. There were small fish being grilled in front of him. He uttered that if the terrible piece of news was true, the fish would jump off the grill and into the water. Oh, a miracle! At the very same moment this also happened. Grandpa N. asserted that the live fish had burns on one side because of the grill. Some time ago a fish died and was solemnly buried in the presence of a patriarch and bishops. This

¹⁰ Н. Начов, Цариград като културен център на българите до 1877 г., В: *Сборник на БАН*, кн. XIX. Клон историко-филологичен и философско-обществен, 12. София, 1925, с. 2-3, 6.

¹¹ С. Ил. Доброплодни, *Кратка автобиография*. София, 1893, с. 21.

legend was popular in Kalofer. It must have been transferred by the Constantinople frieze dealers and tailors, who, in their turn, had heard it from the Greeks¹².

Even the current Bulgarian-Greek argument is missing altogether from Slaveykov's version: it is assumed that the plot was transferred from the Greek to the Bulgarian folklore without a significant shift of ideological focus.

* * *

A Bulgarian literary work dedicated to the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans offers a somewhat different perspective. Svetoslav Milarov's verse drama *The Fall of Constantinople (Padaneto na Tsarigrad)* was written in 1871-1872 in prison, an excerpt from it was published in the *Progress (Napredak)* newspaper (1874), while the whole text reached the readers ten or so years later, in 1883, as a supplement to *Periodical Magazine (Periodichesko spisanie)*. An interesting confession was made by Milarov, "I wanted to glorify, to carve the memory – of the most magnificent frontier of the world, of my native city, of Constantinople (*Tsarigrad*). I love this city, as one would love a girl"¹³. Indeed, within the text the city is "ours/his own", the author assumes the point of view of its inhabitants and contrary to the main line in the literature of the era, actually heroizes the Byzantines. This however does not imply anti-Ottoman orientation, and it seems to me not only for censorship related reasons.

Similar attitude to the city can also be sought in *Constantinople Sonnets (Tsarigradski soneti)* (1899) by K. Velichkov. In this case the nostalgia for youth and the charm of the sea and the city govern the positive, also loving attitude towards the city. The reminiscences of history are few, there are fleeting images of the Argonauts and Byzantium, but they are never in the limelight. The attitude towards it is ambivalent, even rather positive, particularly if compared to that of his friend Ivan Vazov, who did not experience all that strong sentiments towards Constantinople and who even, in connection with a conversation with Bobchev in Constantinople, interjected, "we lamented the failures of Simeon to capture

¹² Начов, *Цариград като културен център*, с. 6, Note. See also П. Р. Славейков, *Съчинения*, Т. 3. София, Български писател, 1979, с. 289-324.

¹³ Св. Миларов, *Небесният преврат. Политически дневник, писма, статии, кроежи*. Съст. П. Величков. София, Факел, 2003, с. 130. Milarov passed through life without a wife, and maybe without great love either.

Constantinople, which would have been very easy to do at that time, if we were asked¹⁴. Velichkov was overcome with another type of sentiments.

Summary: The poet addresses Byzantium stating that he is not the country's son, yet every time he passes by the sites of its past triumphant power, he cannot help but feel bitter sorrow¹⁵.

Even the neighborhood that has become an emblem of the Greek sentiments against the Bulgarians evokes nostalgia:

Summary: The name of the Fener neighbourhood in Constantinople has a magic ring for the poet that excites and captivates him as in the days of his childhood¹⁶.

Still, the memory of the aspiration to have Constantinople conquered is retained, but in this case also the poet's attitude is rather ambivalent.

Summary: The lyrical character feels avidity impulses and wonders what he would do if he was in charge of Khan Krum's heroic hordes. He is intrigued why his brave and mysterious ancestors had returned after their victories and suggests that they probably felt nostalgia for their native fields and woods¹⁷.

¹⁴ Х. Мевсим, Иван Вазов в прежеждие, или как патриарха преминава турската граница и митница, *LiterNet*, 25.08.2012, N 8 (153).

¹⁵ Не съм твой син, Византию, но сявга,
когато мина покрай тез места,
де твойта мощ ликувала е нявга,
неволно падам в горестна тъга.
(К. Величков, XXIX. „Не съм твой син”, Съчинения в пет тома, Т. I. Поезия. София, Български писател, 1986, с. 65).

¹⁶ Фенер! Магическото име
в уши ми сладко пак звъни
и днес вълнува ме, плени ме
като в детинските ми дни.
(Величков, XXV. „Фенер!”, Съчинения в пет тома, с. 61).

¹⁷ И сещам да възникват в мен пориви алчни,
и питам се неволно що бих сторил,
да бих имал в ръцете си на Крум юначни
пълчища, които тука е водил.
Защо корона василевска вий мечтахте,
о, мои храбри, мои тайнствени деди
и, победители, назад се пак върнахте?

The Bulgarian literature of the early 20th century has also documented another attitude towards Constantinople: refusal on the part of the Bulgarian ruler to conquer the city, his reasons being noteworthy. It was prompted even earlier in K. Velichkov's verse: "though victors, you came back again". My attention was drawn to it by Albena Hranova's important work¹⁸. In a not particularly typical idyllic work by Petko Y. Todorov, entitled *King Simeon (Tsar Simeon)*¹⁹, the ruler (and in a sense the author as well) reflects:

Both chroniclers and sages will someday write in their books: it was not a king that came here to glorify the name of Christ, to make the world aware of his mind and wisdom, but an ungrateful barbarian, who had been given both faith and a book in his hand, that brought his hordes from the Balkans to make Byzantium a captive and set fire on it!²⁰

Some fifteen years later, N. Raynov essentially repeated the same idea in *Visions from Ancient Bulgaria (Videniya iz drevna Bulgaria, 1918)*:

But Simeon does not want to be called barbarian and quite a few Romaioi have thought that my defenders are bear-trainers and tyrannizers! I will not allow the collapse of the diamond cusps of the sacred palace: the city is not a battlefield! What is it that attracts us to the city of Constantine?... Simeon will not shed blood where the faith of the Bulgarians has come from...²¹

E. Sugarev makes the next step as well by comparing the refusal of Nikolay Raynov's Simeon with the disappointment of Constantinos Cavafy's Byzantines that the barbarians have not come, and maybe they do not even exist²².

Дали не мъчеше кат мен и вашите гърди
тъга за родните полета и гори,
и ней и блянове, и слава жертвувахте?

Величков, XXXV. „Пред моите очи”, Съчинения в пет тома, с. 71.

¹⁸ А. Хранова, *Историография и литература*, с. 229.

¹⁹ First published in the *Common Cause (Obshto delo)* magazine in 1902, and later on in *Idylls (Idilii)*, 1908.

²⁰ П. Тодоров, *Събрани произведения*. Т. 1, Български писател, София, 1957, с. 278.

²¹ Н. Райнов, „Цар Симеон”, *Избрани произведения*, Т. 1, Български писател, София, 1969, с. 145.

²² Е. Сугарев, *Николай Райнов – боготърсачът богоборец*. София, Карина М, 2007, с. 165-166.

Night is here but the barbarians have not come.
Some people arrived from the frontiers,
And they said that there are no longer any barbarians.
And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?
Those people were a kind of salution²³.

The remarks by P. Todorov and N. Raynov can in no way be regarded as dominant or representative of Bulgarian culture and of the way in which the Bulgarians have thought of the past. But perhaps they are suggestive of the existence of alternative overtones in the general image and point to its ambivalent content in Bulgarian culture.

The attitude of nationalism towards Byzantium seems clear, even though it may not be single-dimensional, it may be loaded with more sophisticated suggestions, such as, for instance, in the case of a poem by Andrey Germanov:

Summary: Byzantium is sly and cunning and although you are strong and covered with glory, you will not conquer Constantinople, but if you drive the spear into the gate and shout for everyone to hear that you are its enemy, this will make you equal to it and you will have your Constantinople²⁴.

But the traditional attitude towards Byzantium and Constantinople does not overlap with the whole picture; the attitude towards Constantinople, a traditional object of desires, aspirations, fears and hatred, is more complex, I would say ambivalent. Popular legends and particularly literary texts can reveal its various images and diverse interpretations of historical events, which inadvertently contradict the nationalist perspective. In some of them it may turn out that Constantinople, besides being Byzantine, of the Mother of God (as a popular Greek song suggests)²⁵ or Ottoman, can also be “ours”. Or the centre of a civilization that has to be preserved.

²³ C. Cavafy, *Waiting for the Barbarians*: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51294/waiting-for-the-barbarians>.

²⁴ Византия е хитра и лукава - ти няма да превземеш Цариград.
Макар и силен и обвян от слава, ти няма да превземеш Цариград.
Но копие то в портите забий, викни пред всички, че си неин враг.
Това ще те направи с нея равен. И ти ще имаш своя Цариград.

А. Германов, *Четиристишия*. Варна, „Г. Бакалов”, 1974.

²⁵ М. Хърцфелд, *Културната интимност. Социална поезика в националната държава*. София, Просвета, 2007.

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Nikolay Aretov

Institute for Literature
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
52 Shipchencki Prohod Blvd. (Block 17)
Sofia 1113
Bulgaria
naretov@gmail.com

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THE CITIES IN THE BALKANS: GAS LIGHTING IN OTTOMAN CONSTANTINOPLE UNTIL THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Alexandre Kostov

Abstract: *In Constantinople, the first gas lamp was lit in 1856. Until 1914, the Ottoman capital underwent a complex, but gradual process of introducing and distributing gas for public lighting, as part of the „European“ modernisation of the city. It provided lighting mainly in the central parts of Pera-Galata, Stamboul, for the Asian Scutari and Kadiköy, and in some of its suburbs. In addition to street lighting, gas was also used in palaces, administrative and business buildings and in private homes. A comparison shows that on the eve of the First World War, Constantinople gave way to other capitals in the region such as Bucharest and Athens with respect to the distribution of public lighting. Unlike the capitals of Greece and Romania, in reality also until 1914, due to its late introduction, electricity was still not a real competition for gas. However, it can be noted that, in Constantinople, as in other cities in Southeast Europe, gas lighting contributed to urban modernisation and social life, as well as to increasing the security of its inhabitants in the dark part of the day.*

Keywords: *Constantinople, Gas Lighting, Pera-Galata, Gas Industry, Ottoman Modernisation*

The process of modernisation of Balkan cities during the “long 19th century” passes, following the example of the West, through the introduction of a number of important social services, such as water supply and sanitation, public lighting and transport. Their emergence and development in Europe is based on the use of new technologies and materials. Progress in lighting is expressed in the introduction in the early 19th century of industrial gas for these purposes (produced mostly from coal, but also from wood). During the second half of the century, attempts to use other means of lighting, for

example oil or acetylene were made, but due to various reasons, they failed. After 1880, a new serious competitor of gas emerged – electricity. The two types of light sources were forced over quite lengthy periods to co-exist in many cities in Europe. In the course of their competitive struggle, gas lighting underwent changes, eliminating some of its serious flaws. The invention of the Austrian chemist Carl Auer von Welsbach, who patented the so-called incandescent mantle in 1885, was of particular significance. The introduction of the new type of lamp, named “Auer” after him, eliminated a very significant deficiency of gas lighting, namely its relatively low brightness. The products of gas factories in the course of the 19th century were used increasingly not only for public and private lighting, but also for home heating and cooking and for propulsion of motors and turbines in industry¹.

The Balkans, and above all the capitals and the bigger cities, followed the example of the West in this respect, albeit sometimes with a significant delay. The Constantinople case is interesting due to many reasons. The huge city on the Bosphorus was the first among the Balkan capitals to introduce gas lighting, a few years ahead of Athens and Bucharest². The scale of the Ottoman capital should be considered as well, with its huge population and territory. The megalopolis on the Bosphorus, which was of an impressive size, not only from a Balkan, but also from a general European perspective, was inevitably forced to seek a solution to its communal problems and in particular to problems related to lighting. That is why it resorted to the use of industrial gas. There are numerous publications, mainly by Turkish authors³, on the history of the gas industry and lighting in Constantinople up to the First World War. Nevertheless, some “blanks” remain in it, as well

¹ On the development of the gas industry in Europe until World War I, Fr. Goodall, *Burning to serve. Selling gas in competitive markets*, Ashbourne, Landmark, 1999; S. Paquier, J.-P. Williot (dir.) *L'industrie du gaz en Europe aux XIXe – XXe siècles*. Bruxelles, etc., P.I.E. – PeterLang, 2005; R. Adunka, M.V. Orna *Carl Auer vonWelsbach: Chemist, Inventor, Entrepreneur*. Springer, 2018; J. Craig, F. Gerali, F. MacAulauy, R. Sorkhabi (eds.) *History of the European Oil and Gas Industry*, London, Geological Society of London, 2018.

² The first gas lamps were lit up respectively in 1862 and 1871, ref. A. Kostov, *L'industrie du gaz dans la périphérie européenne avant 1914: le cas d'Athènes et de Bucarest*, In: S. Paquier, J.-P. Williot (dir.) *L'industrie du gaz en Europe aux XIXe – XXe siècles*. Bruxelles, etc., P.I.E. – Peter Lang, 2005, p.181-190.

³ See for example Z.Toprak, *Aydınlatma (Osmanlı Dönemi)*, In: *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 1993, cilt 1, s. 476-481 ; S. Kayserilioğlu, M. Mazak, K. Kon, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Havagazının Tarihçesi*, C. 1, İstanbul 1999, s. 30-68 ; R. Akbulut, C. Sorguç *Gazhaneler*, In : *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, C. 3, İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı, 1994, p. 377-378.

as the problem of the serious differences in publications by scholars with respect to important facts and dates in the development of the gas industry and lighting in the Ottoman capital. This article is intended to present the main elements in the development of gas enterprises in Constantinople until the First World War by supplementing the facts that are known with new ones, taken from Western archives and published sources.

The first enterprises for production of gas from coal in Europe were built in the beginning of the 19th century. Thanks to them, the new mode of public lighting appeared first across the English Channel – in London (1814) and then on the Continent – in Brussels (1818). In the 1820s and 1830s, the example set by these two capitals was followed by many other cities in Western Europe – in Great Britain, France, the German States etc. By the end of the century, they were joined by Russia, the Habsburg Empire⁴ and other states. The introduction of gas lighting in the Balkan region began only after 1850. Constantinople was the first city where a gas factory was built. Before examining this case, we should note that gas factories were among the first modern industrial enterprises in the Ottoman Empire and the rest of the Balkans.

“Palace” Gas Factories

The development of the first gas factory (gasworks) in the Ottoman Empire coincided with the Crimean War (1853-1856). No wonder that Constantinople was the first city, where such an enterprise was built. Due to its scale and special status as the capital of the Empire, this city attracted the interest of Western entrepreneurs wishing to develop gas lighting. There are reports of this as early as in the 1820s and 1830s. Moreover, in 1829, such a service was introduced in Cairo – the capital of the still (nominally) Ottoman Egypt⁵.

Already in the 1840s, authorities in Constantinople tried to resolve the serious problems related to the security of the residents and in particular, night-time

⁴ Gas lighting in the provinces of the Habsburg Empire in the Balkan region or in its proximity was introduced after 1850. The first ones were Ljubljana (1861) and Zagreb (1862). See Велинова, З., И. Начев, *София и балканската модерност (1878-1914)*. София, Рива, 2016, с. 288-307. Before that, there was only an installation in Fiume/Rijeka and Temesvar/*Timișoara*, where it was introduced in the first half of the 1850s. The only exception was the city of Trieste, which was lit with gas in 1849.

⁵ The palace of the viceroy near Cairo was illuminated with gas. See *Le Messager des chambres* (Paris), 7 juin 1829.

crime. In addition to the undertaken purely police and administrative measures, we could also note the decision to introduce street lighting with oil-lamps. For this purpose, for example, in 1846 a certain number of them were purchased and installed in some places in Pera neighbourhood⁶. The famous Scottish writer and traveller Charles MacFarlane wrote about the state of lighting in Constantinople at the end of the 1840s: “Before leaving London we had been assured that the greater part of Pera, as well as of Constantinople Proper, was well lighted by gas. Except a wretched oil-lamp, hung out by a string, here and there, in the grand street of Pera, there was no night lighting at all. True, they had brought out, at good salaries, two English gas-fitters, and some pipes and some of the necessary machinery; but these men were never set to work, and the machinery was intended wholly and solely for the illumination of the Sultan’s new stone palace on the Bosphorus. One of the gas-fitters took a fit of disgust, and went home to England without getting his arrears paid, the other, whom we left at Constantinople in July, would have charge of twenty-five lamps – if the gas-works should ever be set up at the palace”⁷.

In publications on the development of Constantinople in the late Ottoman period, the emergence of gas lighting is linked to the modernisation of the Ottoman capital that began during and immediately after the Crimean War. During that period, under the strong influence from the West and mostly of France, a series of measures were undertaken with respect to the reorganisation of urban governance. Thus, in 1854, following the French example, a Prefecture (*Şehremaneti*) was created, headed by a prefect and a city council. In its activities, the new administration was supported by the city planning commission (*İntizam-ı Şehir Komisyonu*). Despite of its limited budget, the prefecture had to take care of important issues related to street regulation, water supply and sanitation, public lighting, transport etc. The establishment of separate districts (on paper), which would have some degree of self-governance, in 1857 was a follow-up to these attempts for reform. In reality however, the first of these autonomous administrations functioned, known as the *Municipality of the Sixth Circle* (*Municipalité du VI cercle*). It had limited powers to govern the area encompassing Pera and Galata, including Tophane⁸.

⁶ A. Wishnitzer, *Shedding New Light: Outdoor Illumination in Late Ottoman Istanbul*, In: J. Meier, U. Hasenöhrl, K. Krause, M. Porthorst (eds.) *Urban Lighting, Light Pollution and Society*, New York & London, Routledge, 2014, p. 66-83.

⁷ Ch. MacFarlane, *Turkey and Its Destiny: The Result of Journeys Made in 1847 and 1848 to Examine into the State of that Country*. Vol 2. London, John Murray, 1850, p. 187.

⁸ On the administrative reforms in Ottoman Constantinople after the early 1850s and their connection to lighting and other utilities. See St. Rosenthal *Foreigners*

Clearly, even before these reforms, the Sultan had taken a decision to build the first gas factory. In the period 1853-1856 in the area of Dolma-Baghche (Dolmabahçe), located on the Bosphorus between Tophane and Beshiktash (Beşiktaş), a palace was built for the needs of Abdul Medjid. A gas factory was built near the building in order to provide lighting. It was developed under the supervision of the British engineer Crawford, who also served as its director for about ten years.

Interesting and important information on the background and first years of existence of the gas factory in Dolma-Baghche can be found in a British publication from 1863 and it is worth citing: "Some fifteen years ago, Mr. Crawford (brother of Mr. Thomas Crawford, of Low Walker, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne), who had gone to the Levant, submitted to the late Sultan of Turkey a plan for lighting the imperial Palace. He constructed a model apparatus, which supplied twenty-five burners to the interior of the building. The Sultan, pleased with the experiment, gave orders to light the Kiosk of the Valide Sultan. When the palace of Dolma-Baghche was built, Mr. Crawford was directed to construct works for illuminating it with gas and he made the necessary arrangements upon a small scale in the neighbourhood of the building. Five years later, two companies, one English, the other French, proposed to light Pera with gas. The Sultan, wishing to accomplish the design with the agency already commenced, authorised Mr. Crawford to extend the existing works, and subsequently gas has been conveyed by this instrumentality into the streets and houses of Pera, which has spread down into the lower region of Galata, lessening the amount of skulking crime, the Levant Herald states, in those purlieus where it was previously favoured by darkness"⁹.

The factory provided lighting not only for the palace but also for the nearby barracks. According to some Turkish publications, the gas factory (gasworks) was officially opened in June 1856¹⁰. Other dates are also cited in various publications when it comes to the exact time of opening of the enterprise and especially concerning when lighting appeared in Pera. According to Steven Rosenthal, this was

and Municipal Reform in Istanbul: 1855-1865, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1980, 11, p. 227-245; Z. Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*. Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1986.

⁹ *The Journal of Gas Lighting, Water Supply & Sanitary Improvement* (London), 19 May 1863, p. 321.

¹⁰ M. Mazak, Türkiye'de Modern Aydınlatmanın Başlangıcı ve Aydınlatma Tarihimize Genel Bir Bakış (1853-1930): http://www.emo.org.tr/etkinlikler/aysem/etkinlik_bildirileri_detay.php?etkinlikkod=67&bilkod=2364.

in the “late spring” of 1856¹¹. The Austrian press at that time, however, announces that gas lighting in Constantinople was launched on December 28, 1856¹². The article anticipates that “soon all of Pera will be illuminated this way”. The date is obviously new style, but even this indicates a big discrepancy with the statements in the cited publications. It is worth noting that at the same time, the Viennese newspaper informs that the Frenchman Marchais was granted a 75-year gas lighting concession in Smyrna.

Due to the existence of a greater capacity, with the Sultan’s permission, part of gas production was directed with priority towards the delivery of this new type of energy for street lighting and other public buildings and places in the neighbouring district, inhabited by “European” residents. Actually, all of this happened mainly on the insistence of the foreigners and other residents from Pera-Galata district, which was adjacent to the palace. Naturally, in the end all of this took place with the approval of Sultan Abdul Medjid.

Initially, part of the gas that was manufactured (and not needed for the palace), was directed towards Pera district (Beyoğlu) for street lighting. The first boulevard in Istanbul, lit with industrial gas, was Grande Rue de Péra (Cadde-i Kebir). In the beginning, one lamp was placed every 80 metres on one side in the direction from Taksim to Galatasaray, and then from Galatasaray to Galata (Karaköy), and gas was supplied via a network of pipes from the gasworks in Dolma-Baghche. After the launching of street lighting, also private clients started using it, mainly owners of big houses in Pera-Galata.

In the meantime, the Municipality of the Sixth Circle also began working. Under the direction of this administration, the district turned into an experimental field for implementation of reforms and for “European-style” modernisation of the Ottoman capital. For this purpose, until the end of the 1860s, projects for regulation of the street network, water supply and lighting for the residents of the neighbourhood were prepared. Many of the plans were not fulfilled. Some of them, directly or indirectly linked to gas lighting, were implemented until the autonomous governance of the Sixth Circle fell apart, after yet another administrative reform in 1877. These included the development of Karaköy Square, on a wide road between Taksim and the military school in Pangalty, later continued towards Shishli etc.¹³ Other sites developed with the assistance of the city government and of private companies were also important for the city. They included,

¹¹ Rosenthal, *Foreigners*, p. 232.

¹² *Wiener Zeitung*, 11 Jaenner 1857, S. 31.

¹³ Çelik, *The Remaking*, p. 69.

for example, the introduction of horse-drawn trams. In 1871, its first section was opened in Pera-Galata district between Azap Capou and Beshiktash part of the line to Ortakouy (Ortaköy). Soon afterwards, trams started running on the tracks placed also on other streets in the area, and also south of the Golden Horn – in the old part of the city. The gas lighting plans also included railway stations. We should remind the reader, that in the early 1870s, the Oriental Railway Company developed the first sections of the line leading from Constantinople to Sofia and Belgrade. Part of the stations were located in the town itself or in its surroundings. These included the Sirkeci terminal, which was initially located in a temporary building. Later, in 1890 a solid new Oriental-style station was built there, designed by the German architect August Jachmund and it was equipped with gas lighting.

By the end of the 1860s, other bigger streets were also illuminated. Industrial gas lighting became so popular that in the nights of religious celebrations, the most important temples were illuminated with it, while the Naum Theatre also used industrial gas for lighting. During this period, a lighting network had already been developed, encompassing the area of Pera, Beshiktash and Harbiye¹⁴. The management of the Imperial gasworks of Dolma-Baghche had already been entrusted to the Ministry of Defence and in particular to the Grand Master of Artillery (Top-hané-i-Amiré Heyeti).

In the meantime, the interest towards the gas industry in the Ottoman Empire underwent development. Similarly, to the West, new factories required private initiative, from abroad. As already mentioned, a lighting concession for Smyrna/Izmir was granted to a French entrepreneur already in 1856-57. As a result of the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken in this city in the early 1860s, the first street gas lamps were lit up. Later, the Ottoman state would continue the practice of granting lighting concessions to private companies, also in other large cities of the empire such as Beirut and Thessaloniki. In Thessaloniki however, the second gas factory was also rebuilt for the needs of the Sultan and his court. It was developed in 1865 at the newly built Beglerbegi Palace (in the Asian part of the capital) and was located in Kuzguncuk. Like Dolma-Baghche, it provided part of its excessive produce for the illumination of some of the neighbouring streets, but on a much smaller scale. In the next decades however, this enterprise did not undergo significant development.

As far as Imperial Gasworks in Dolma-Baghche are concerned, until Crawford's death (in the second half of the 1860s), the enterprise worked quite well.

¹⁴ Mazak, *Türkdy'e de Modern Aydınlatman*.

According to the already cited source, “the supply of gas daily amounts to 85,000 cubic feet in the summer, and 120,000 cubic feet in the winter. It passes, through 11^{1/4} miles of piping for the lighting of the Imperial Palace alone, and, overall, through 28 miles of piping for the benefit of Pera and Galata, in the streets of which it feeds in all 473 burners. In public and private buildings, it is measured by 636 meters, and it lights at least 7,000 burners... Mr. Crawford is assisted by Mr. Hislop in the management of the works, and under them are employed 50 operatives. Turks and Armenians”¹⁵.

After Crawford’s death, the owners did not take sufficient care for the maintenance and modernisation of the factory and the distribution network. According to a French archive source, where the data is somewhat different from the already cited ones, in the first years in Pera-Galata district, a total of 853 street lamps were installed, part of which burned and were not replaced and in 1875, only 720 lamps remained¹⁶. The population in the district suffered for many years from the “horrible gas” produced in the Dolma-Baghche factory. As a result of this, and of the constantly overcharged bills, part of the private clientele turned to oil lighting.

Here, we should also mention some dangers associated with the use of gas. They were manifested in a great scourge for Constantinople residents – frequent fires, when mainly the wooden buildings in entire districts would burn down. One of the biggest ones was in 1870, when almost all of Pera was destroyed. According to a publication in the official newspaper of the Imperial Medical Society, gas in the Ottoman capital significantly contributed to the spread of the fire and the damage caused by it. This was due to the melting from the high temperature of some of the lead pipes connecting the homes to the distribution network. Some examples of the damage caused were given. One depicts a male house servant in the home of Agop effendi Nouradunghian, which was unaffected by the fire, who entered with a candle in hand in one of the rooms, obviously filled with released gas, and died on the spot. In some of the other houses, gas “assisted” the burning flames and contributed to their complete destruction. This is the case of the home of the Macastarian family in Tarla Bashi¹⁷.

¹⁵ *The Journal of Gas Lighting*. Note: 1 cubic feet = 0.03 cubic meter.

¹⁶ Information on the first gas enterprise is contained in an extensive report on the topic prepared by the branch of the French bank Crédit Lyonnais in Constantinople on 30 March 1875. See Archives historiques du Crédit Lyonnais (Paris), Dossier 62, AH 120. It mentions that the factory as built in the period 1858-1859.

¹⁷ *Gazette médicale d’Orient* 10, XIV, janvier 1871, p. 1.

Data from the cited French source show the greatest energy consumers. According to it, the financial data for the period 1870-1874 on consumption in Pera – Galata district are divided between: 1) The palace in Dolma-Baghche and the barracks – 890 thousand piastre, 2) Municipality of the Sixth Circle (for street lighting) – 900 thousand piastre and 3) private clients – 1,130 thousand piastre. It should be considered that already around 1870, the enterprise had accumulated annual losses of more than 25 thousand Turkish lira. This was mainly due to the poor state of the sewerage and the losses in gas distribution. Moreover, the factory in Dolma-Baghche had always credited the Municipality of the Sixth Circle. As at 1875, the outstanding sum amounted to 12 thousand Turkish lira. The deficits were covered only because the enterprise belonged to the Sultan's civil list, otherwise the gas supply to Pera-Galata district would have had to be cut off¹⁸.

In an attempt to resolve the problem, in the summer of 1874 the gasworks was transferred under the governance of the city's prefecture. The data contained in a British report concerning approximately the same period, indicate that from an annual supply of 1,145 cubic metres of gas per year, around 261 thousand cubic metres were intended for the illumination of the Sultan palaces (Dolma-Baghche and Tcheraghan¹⁹) and for public lighting in the area (paid for by the prefecture), while the remaining 623 thousand cubic metres were for private clients²⁰.

Besides the streets and the palaces, the gas produced in Dolma-Baghche also illuminated many shops, cafes, theatres and other buildings. Amongst them, the city's residents and visitors were especially impressed by the so-called Cité de Péra or Hristaki Pasaji, built a few years after the fire of 1870 in the likeness of Western commercial centres and in particular the gallery in Milan. In the building, even the staircases were illuminated with gas lamps²¹.

It is worth mentioning that the so-called Tunnel, an underground funicular-type of railway, opened in early 1875 and connecting Pera with its lower part Galata, was as an exception. When it was developed, the idea of gas lighting was

¹⁸ Archives historiques du Crédit Lyonnais (Paris), Dossier 62. Note: 1 Turkish lira = 100 Piaster (kuruş).

¹⁹ Çırağan Palace, located on the Bosphorus, was completed in 1872.

²⁰ Report by Vice-Consul Wrench on the Trade and Commerce of Constantinople for the Years 1874-1875, In: *Trade Reports. Commercial. No. 15 (1878). Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls on the Manufactures, Commerce, & C., of Their Consular Districts.* Part III. (Parliamentary Papers – Vol. 74). London, 1878, p. 834.

²¹ Çelik, *The Remaking*, p. 137.

ruled out because of fears of possible explosions and fires. That is why oil lamps were installed²².

Nevertheless, the contribution of gas lighting to the everyday life in Pera should not be praised too much, especially when it comes to the first years of its introduction. A German man who visited Constantinople in October 1877 wrote about that: “This lighting is limited strictly speaking only to Grande Rue. There is an extremely poor feeling of it in the side streets. We should also add that due to its poor quality, gas has only a limited luminosity and the few lamps on Grande Rue are lit too late and put out too early”²³.

The picture can be enriched also with the description of a British postal worker and writer, who worked and lived in Constantinople in the late 1870s and early 1880s. In his memoirs he wrote:

At that day Constantinople was a city of strange anomalies and surprising contradictions. There was gas in Pera High Street, but in most of the rest of the town, and certainly, throughout all Stamboul, there was no attempt at public lighting, and folk who had to be abroad at night were preceded by servants carrying huge oiled linen lanterns in which were set six or eight candles. All houses were lit by paraffin lamps, and the vast majority were heated by the mangal charcoal brazier, though in wealthy European establishments the huge Viennese porcelain stove – it consumed logs – was beginning to take its place²⁴.

After overtaking the management of the enterprise, the municipality made some improvements to the factory and the gas distribution network. As a whole however, the situation did not improve significantly. As also reported by the press from that period, at the end of the 1880s it became clear that “the factory in Dolma-Baghche, even though expanded from time to time, was not capable of supplying the requested quantity of gas and it became clear even for the Turks that something should be done” in order to be able to respond to the new challenges²⁵. In this situation, a change was made and in the period 1889–1890 the gasworks

²² *Van Nostrand's Eclectic Engineering Magazine* (London), 1875, 12, p. 93.

²³ Fr. von Criegern, *Ein Kreuzzug nach Stambul. Studien und Erlebnisse auf einer Reise im Dienste des rothen Kreuzes*, Dresden, Verlag von E. Pierson's Buchhandlung, 1879, S. 54.

²⁴ Fr. Scudamore, *A sheaf of memories*. London, T. F. Unwin Ltd., 1925, p. 25.

²⁵ *The American Gas Light Journal* (New York), 29 April 1895, p. 606.

once again came under the management of the previous owner, who also took up the maintenance, modernisation of the distribution network and client services²⁶.

Stamboul

In the early 1870s, the Constantinople local government decided to provide lighting also to Stamboul, the old part of Constantinople, located within the fortress walls from Byzantine times and populated mainly by Muslims. A project was designed for this purpose and in 1871, a concession agreement was executed with a Belgian company, which undertook to develop a factory in Yedi Coule, close to the Castle of Seven Towers on the shore of the Sea of Marmara and a network for supply and lighting in this part of the imperial capital. According to the plans, the gas network in Stamboul had to cover practically the entire territory of the district. Its length was around 23 km and it consisted of four axes: 1) Yedi Coule– Eyoub – Galata Bridge (10.6 km); 2) Galata Bridge– Sultan Ahmed (1.7 km); 3) Galata Bridge – Yeni Capou (2.1 km) and 4) Sultan Ahmed – Yeni Capou (8.7 km). Part of the network ran along some streets, which had been intended for the laying of rails for the horse tram²⁷.

According to the project, the gas produced in Yedi Coule was supposed to illuminate public institutions, private homes, the railway stations, as well as other sites. The plan of the city government to develop the first gas lighting in Constantinople, intended especially for social services, is praiseworthy. The difference to the previous ones is that public lighting was no longer an indirect consequence of the need to provide lighting for the Sultan's palaces. However, serious difficulties occurred during the implementation of the project and its launching was delayed significantly.

Pursuant to the commitments undertaken already in 1871, the mentioned company began to build the gas factory in Yedi Coule and the gas transmission network. Two years later, the work was almost completed. One comes across a depiction of all that was accomplished in that period in a report:

Good progress is being made with the gasworks in course of construction at Yedi Coule (“The Seven Towers”), with the gasometer, retorts, stoves, coal stores, and all other appliances, the mason work being already completed. Recently, a

²⁶ The *irade* is from May 1889, while in March 1890, a Sultan's *ferman* was also issued. Mazak, *Türkdye'de Modern Aydınlatman*.

²⁷ In 1872, the tram lines from Emin Eunu to Ak Seray, Ak Seray – Yedi Coule, Ak Seray – Top Capou were opened.

Fraissinet steamer from Marseilles brought a quantity of necessary material for the works, as also posts, lamps, gas jets, reflectors, etc. Gas piping is being laid in the principal thoroughfares, and as soon as the orders now being executed at the famous Creusot Foundry in France are finished, all will be in readiness. The chief delay has arisen from the fact that these works are so overstocked with orders that they will be unable to complete those from Constantinople until the end of the present month. At any rate, unless some unforeseen obstacle arises, there is every reason to believe that the Stamboul gasworks will be in operation, and modern Byzantium lit with gas by the end of the year. The successful carrying out of this useful project is a further verification of the truth of the old adage that “where there is a will there is a way”²⁸.

Streetlamps like the ones in Paris were installed, but despite the expectations of the authorities and the residents, the enterprise responsible for lighting Stamboul could not become operational due to serious problems. Already in 1874, the city government hired a Belgian engineer-specialist to help overcome the grave state. He tried to find solutions for the serious technical problems. The biggest concern had to do with the gas leaks due to the poor state of the street canals, through which the gas was supplied for lighting purposes²⁹.

An investigation showed that the company that was granted the construction concession had strictly performed its duties as per the technical designs provided by the municipality. The problem turned out to be related to the gasometer, which was designed with defects and which could not generate gas. The investigation concluded that “the mains and pipes had been laid down in so unskilful a manner as to allow the gas, had there been any, to run to waste” and nothing was done to remove the flaws³⁰.

In the process of seeking a solution, this time the city government announced a tender for final completion of the factory, which was awarded to a French company and in 1880 it was finally put into operation³¹. The enterprise was managed by the municipality, it supplied 4,000 lanterns in Stamboul and the plan was that in case of a further expansion, it would provide gas also for the districts of *Makrikouy* (Bakırköy), San Stefano (Yeshilköy) and Eyoub.

²⁸ *The Engineer* (London), 36, Nov 7, 1873, p. 314. The publication reprinted the article of the Constantinople Levant Herald.

²⁹ *Archives historiques du Crédit Lyonnais* (Paris).

³⁰ *Report by Vice-Consul Wrench*.

³¹ R. Mantran mentions that lighting in Stamboul was introduced in 1879: R. Mantran, *Histoire d'Istanbul*. Paris, Fayard, 1996, p. 307.

Despite the completion of the project, albeit with difficulty, the state and municipal authorities soon reconsidered their position. In view of the difficulties associated with its exploitation and future expansion, a decision was reached to grant a concession to a private company. On August 25, 1887, the city's municipality granted the rights to the local merchant Hasan Tahsin efendi. He was granted a 40-year concession, under the terms of which he was to provide lighting to the mentioned districts and additionally to install 200 more lanterns free of charge. In exchange, the municipality would pay gas for 500 lanterns. Under the terms of the concession agreement, gas would be supplied to all locations within the fortress wall, i.e. in Stamboul, Makrikouy, San Stefano and the area of Eyoub. Hasan Tahsin effendi was a simple broker in the transaction, and as in other similar cases from that time, he transferred his concession rights on April 19, 1888 to a German-Swiss group. For the purposes of exploiting the concession, the latter established a special company in Basel under the name *Société Ottomane pour l'éclairage de la ville de Constantinople*. The management board included Swiss, Germans and Ottoman subjects close to power³². Already in the following year, this company, also called *Gaz de Stamboul*, passed under the control of a Belgian group led by *Banque de Bruxelles*, the German stakeholders remaining³³. As in 1890, the company had invested USD 729,975 in the factory in Yedi Coule and in the transmission network and in 1892, the company began to function normally.

At that time, it delivered gas for 10-12,000 lamps for public and private lighting. Its use for heating and cooking was quite limited³⁴. Deliveries increased in the next years, including also for heating or engine propulsion in some industrial enterprises. In 1899 - 1900, over 1,000 new lamps for street lighting were installed. According to reports from 1906, the company delivered gas for the illumination of around 20,000 commercial sites and 4,000 street lamps in Stamboul³⁵.

³² The Board of Directors consisted of the following persons: General W. Strecker-Reschid Pascha, General-adjutant des Sultans, Sebaldt Effendi, Sous-secrétaire d'Etat au Ministère des Travaux publics à Constantinople, R. Baur (Stuttgart), Franz Simon von Königsberg (Constantinople), Emanuel Baumberger-Schneider and Robert Tschaggeny (Basel). *Feuille officielle suisse du commerce*, 82, 5 juillet 1888, p. 630.

³³ E. Urban, Th. Verstraeten and Gottlob E. Staenglen (Stuttgart) were assigned with the joint management. *Feuille officielle suisse du commerce*, 73, 20 avril 1889, p. 377-379.

³⁴ *Special Consular Reports*. Vol. VI. Washington, 1892, p. 278.

³⁵ According to the annual reports of Banque de Bruxelles, cited in *Belgium in the Ottoman capital, from the early steps to La Belle Epoque: the centenary of Le Palais de Belgique*:

Scutari – Kadikouy

In the early 1890s, another enterprise for gas lighting was established, this time for the Asian part of Constantinople, namely in Scutari (Üsküdar) and Kadikouy (Kadıköy), which were then located in the *VIII Circle* (*VIIIe cercle de la ville de Constantinople*).

The concession for it had a 50-year period and had been granted by an edict [*ferman*] of July 30, 1891 to a Belgian group headed by Léon Somzée and the French entrepreneur Charles Georgi³⁶. It also received preferential rights to later introduce electrical lighting in this area under equal conditions. A company under the name *Société d'éclairage par le gaz et l'électricité* (*Scutari et Kadikouy*) was set up to run the enterprise³⁷. In the next year, it also built a gas factory in Scutari. According to data from 1894, the enterprise supplied around 2,000 street lamps and 1,200 for private customers. It also provided lighting for the barracks in Haidar-pasha. Later, in the early 20th century, the enterprise provided around 8,000 lamps for private customers.

The very end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century witnessed a growing discussion on the electrification of Constantinople not only for public lighting, but also for urban transport (for trams and planned metro). Undoubtedly, the implementation of all these projects would have facilitated life in the huge city. At that time, the population of the city was a bit over one million. Despite of the diverging and unreliable data concerning their number, we would like to cite some numbers as an example. 237,000 people lived in Pera-Galata district in 1885, and in Stamboul – 390,000 people³⁸. According to data from the period 1896-1897, the population of the city itself was 875,565 inhabitants, and if we add the ones in the Asian part – in Scutari (105,690) and Kadikouy (32,211), the city numbered more than one million inhabitants. In the beginning of the

1900-2000, Istanbul, Consulat General of Belgium, 2000, p. 41. Ed. Pech, *Manuel des sociétés anonymes fonctionnant en Turquie*. Constantinople, Gérard Frères, 1911, p. 222-224.

³⁶ The group of Belgians led by Léon Somzée, his sons Gaétan and Côme, Lucien Guinotte and Léon Brison, as well as Charles Georgi, represented two companies: Société générale internationale d'éclairage par le gaz et l'électricité (Paris) and la Société anonyme d'éclairage de Centre (Bruxelles). In the 1890s, it demonstrated an increased interest in the Balkans and won concessions in Romania (Galatz) and Greece (Corfu). A. Kostov, *Le capital belge et les entreprises de tramways et d'éclairage dans les Balkans (fin du 19e et début du 20e siècle)*, *Études balkaniques* (Sofia), 1989, N 1, p. 23-33.

³⁷ Pech, *Manuel*, p. 218-221.

³⁸ Çelik, *The Remaking*, p. 93.

20th century, it was between 1 and 1.2 million people, while on the eve of the First World War it had probably risen to around 1.5 million residents³⁹.

Powerful financial and industrial groups from Western Europe expressed an interest in these large-scale projects. However, this process was delayed, even though in other cities of the Empire, electric lighting had already been introduced, for example in Thessaloniki⁴⁰. According to many authors, the reason for this delay was the Sultan's horror of electricity and its possible use for attacks against him. In any case, in the beginning of the 20th century, some hotels, buildings of banks and companies already had some small electrical installations for lighting, but it was significantly delayed for the streets.

After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the conditions for implementation of city transportation (trams and metro) and lighting projects changed. The execution of the plans for electrification of the huge city became a reality. In 1909, there were serious attempts by Western companies to get concessions, even for lighting. Two years later, after some of them reached an agreement, the well-known Consortium de Constantinople was established, uniting the interests of influential French, German, Swiss, Hungarian and Belgian groups. Soon a concession for electric lighting of the Ottoman capital was granted. Due to the wars and natural disasters, the power station in Silihtar was opened only in the spring of 1914. Thus, Constantinople was the last large city in Europe to have electric public lighting⁴¹.

In this situation, after 1909, there were changes in the gas lighting companies in Constantinople. For example, a Hungarian-Belgian group, led by Ganz & Co. acquired Istanbul's gas lighting company. Due to the poor management of the Dolma Baghche plant and the significant increase in the price of gas in November 1909, the government decided to return the gasworks to the management of the city municipality. However, talks with the prefecture went on for a long time and only in June 1913 the Municipality finally restored its management of the enterprise.

In the meantime, around 1910, the government changed its position on the enterprise in Dolma-Baghche. It sought to transfer the rights in the hands of a

³⁹ K. Karpat, *The Social and Economic Transformation of Istanbul in the Nineteenth Century*, *Bulletin de l'AIESEE*, 1972, 12, 2, p. 301-303.

⁴⁰ M. Anastassiadou, *Salonique, 1830-1912: une ville ottomane à l'âge des Réformes*. Leiden, Brill, 1997, p. 165-167.

⁴¹ J. Thobie, *Intérêts et impérialisme français dans l'Empire ottoman*. Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne-Imprimerie nationale, 1977, p. 442-447.

private company and announced a tender for this⁴². At the same time, measures were undertaken to improve gas production and distribution. The enterprise was reorganised and its management was assumed by a new body – *Administration du gaz de Dolma Baghche (Hava Ghazi Idaresi)*⁴³. Already in 1910, changes were made to allow residents to receive more regular and pure gas at prices that were 20 percent lower. The municipality also replaced some of the old street lanterns, called *papillons* with incandescent lamps.

The second period of the Municipality's management of the gasworks in Dolma-Baghche did not continue for long. By a Sultan's decree (*irade*) of 30 January 1914, a concession was granted to the French group of Banque Périer for lighting of Pera and Yenikouy, a town located on the Upper Bosphorus. On June 25th of the same year, a company *Société du gaz de Constantinople* was set up to operate it⁴⁴. Consequently, its operations were impacted negatively by the start of World War I and the Ottoman Empire's participation in it.

Thus, in an attempt to take stock, one may say that during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Constantinople went through a complex, but gradual process of introduction and distribution of gas for public lighting, but also for the everyday life of its residents. In 1910-1914, around 9,000 lamps had been installed there, lighting mainly the central parts of the "European" Pera-Galata district, old Stamboul, the districts Scutari and Kadikouy that were situated in Asia, as well as some of its suburbs⁴⁵. In addition, gas lighting was introduced in palaces, administrative and business buildings and in private homes. The most adequate assessment of the case of Constantinople can be given in comparison with other major cities in Europe. It seems most appropriate to make a comparison between it and the capitals of Greece and Romania, where gas lighting was also introduced. It should be borne in mind here that by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century these two cities were significantly inferior to the Ottoman capital in population and area. Thus, Athens (still without Piraeus) had a population of 167,000 people according to the census conducted in 1907. The population of Bucharest was 341,000 people by 1912. In

⁴² *Revue technique d'Orient* (Constantinople) N 4, 15.12. 1910.

⁴³ *Annuaire oriental* (Constantinople), 1913, p. 132.

⁴⁴ Thobie, *Intérêts*, p. 443.

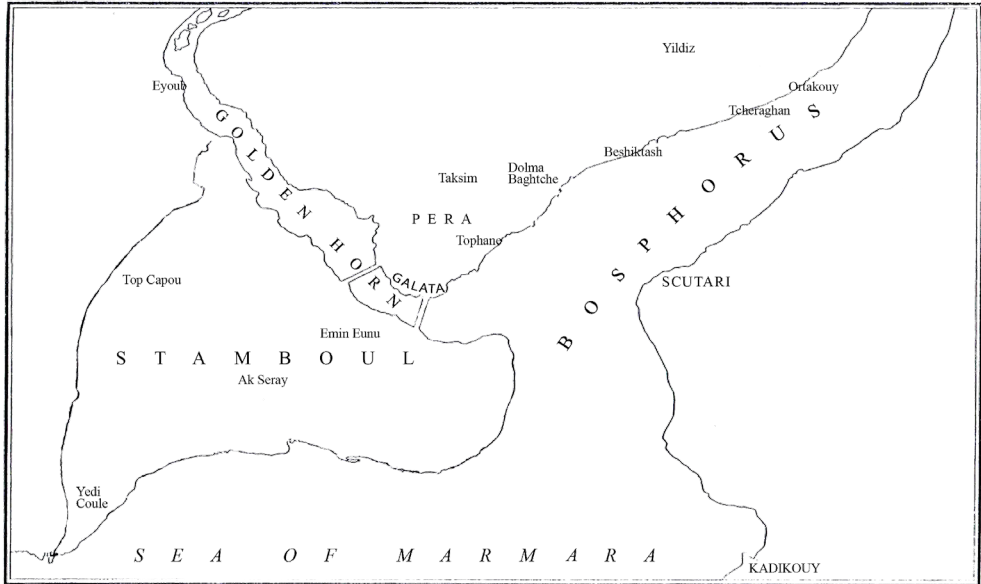
⁴⁵ As in 1914, there were totally 8,742 lamps in Constantinople. They were distributed as follows: 4,000 in Stamboul, 1,966 in Pera Galata, and 2,776 in Scutari-Kadikouy. Mazak, *Türkçüye'de Modern Aydınlatman*. Different, but similar data are cited in other publications.

these two capitals, respectively about 5,000 and 7,000 street lamps powered by gas had been installed by 1910⁴⁶. It is difficult to make a very accurate estimate, as we do not know how many people lived in Constantinople at that time. Even if we assume that it was 1,200,000 people (and it is probably much more), there were 7.5 street lamps per every thousand. It is obvious that in this respect the Ottoman capital was significantly behind Bucharest (20.5 lamps per thousand inhabitants) and Athens (30 lamps). In addition, despite the lack of sufficiently reliable data, it can be argued that Constantinople lagged behind in replacing old street lamps with new ones of the Auer type. Otherwise, all three cities were similar in the distribution of gas lighting: more concentrated in the central parts and less in their peripheries, but in Constantinople this difference was more obvious. An important difference is that in the capitals of Greece and Romania in the early twentieth century, electricity was increasingly entering public lighting and in some of the more important boulevards and streets, it replaced gas. In Constantinople, as we have seen, this process did not occur until the eve of the First World War.

The reasons for this delay are many and are related to the specific management of the city, which was different even within the Ottoman Empire, if we compare it with cities such as Thessaloniki and Smyrna. Perhaps this is why Constantinople remains a unique case in the history of the gas industry in Europe before 1914, with the fact that for a long time the first enterprise in it was owned by the state and operated by it. In all other cities of the Old Continent, the management and ownership of these enterprises was in the hands of either municipalities or private companies. Otherwise, in Constantinople, as in other cities in Southeast Europe (and not only), the contribution of gas lighting to urban modernisation and social life in the spirit of the best examples from the West can be taken into account, albeit more limited. There is no doubt that, as in the other cases, the introduction and use of this technology during the period under review helped to increase the security of its inhabitants in the dark part of the day.

⁴⁶ Kostov, *L'industrie*, p. 185-190.

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Alexandre Kostov

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
kostov.alexandre@gmail.com*

A STRATEGY OF A BEAUTIFICATION, OR HOW “THE DECADENT ISTANBUL” TURNED INTO THE “PEARL OF TURKEY”¹

Kalina Peeva

Abstract: *The present study examines Istanbul's transformation in the period between the proclamation of the Turkish republic in 1923 and the end of the Democratic Party's rule in 1960. The reasons for the exclusion of the old imperial capital from early initiatives for constructing the modern Turkish nation-state are laid out, as well as the process of gradual integration of the Seljuk, Ottoman, and Byzantine architectural heritage into the paradigm of the “national”. The urban planning changes carried out under the direction of the French urbanist H. Prost are also examined, along with the radical spatial and architectural transformation undertaken during A. Menderes' time which definitively destroyed the historical appearance of the city. The study further traces the attitude towards the minority clusters in Istanbul and imperial elites that proved to be a crucial element influencing government policy in one direction or another during the entire period of examination in line with the changes in state ideology.*

Keywords: *Istanbul, Modernization, Nationalism, Religious Minorities, Urban Planning*

Since the proclamation of the republic and during the entire 20th century, a clearly discernible link existed between the changes in Turkey's political regime and the attitude of Turkish statesmen

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towards Istanbul. The study at hand explores the transformation of the old imperial capital since the beginning of the republican period until the end of the rule of the Democratic Party (DP) which led the national government after the 1950 elections and was overthrown by a coup d'état in 1960.

In the early years of the republic, Istanbul's prominence in the political life of the country was naturally – following the moving of the capital – but also purposefully restricted, hence urban development and modernization initiatives failed to take place in the city. The new ideology of the republican government striving to break up with the imperial past and traditions in order to stimulate the process of national formation became one of most important reasons for neglecting the city. With time, under the influence of the changes in the paradigm of the “national”, the Turkish authorities' attitude towards the imperial capital changed. In the mid-1930s, in parallel with the reconceptualization of the place of historical monuments within the Turkish republic's national history, the realization of the first project for large-scale urban modernization began, which continued through World War II as well. After the introduction of a multi-party system, the imperial city gradually gained new prominence defined by the changes in the Kemalist conceptualization of the nation. The state's attitude towards Istanbul changed radically in the early 1950s, and during the entire decade of rule of Democratic Party, the imperial city assumed the peculiar role of an informal capital. Against the backdrop of this new political use of the symbol “Istanbul”, a whole series of demographic and urban development measures discernibly accompanied the political and ideological changes that had occurred irreversibly in the Kemalist model of the general state development. No sooner had Adnan Menderes entered into office that he began to actively propagate the need to “beautify” the “neglected city”, and his measures for Istanbul's Turkification led to the uncontrolled growth in the size of its population and to a replacement of the city's social composition. The oppression of minority groups, which would become the reason for their emigration, and the recruitment of migrants from Turkey's provincial regions violated the relationships of traditional urban culture and imposed a new model of public behavior. In the second half of the 1950s, due to the poorly planned large-scale constructions and the accompanying demolitions, Istanbul's historical urban fabric was destroyed as well.

Up until now, the topic of the study at hand has been explored predominantly by Turkish authors. Without any claims for exhaustiveness, I will mention as particularly useful for this research the publications of Cana Bilsel, who explores the early interventions in Istanbul's urban planning in detail and the work of the French architect Henri Prost on the realization of a new urban planning blueprint

between 1936-1951²; of İpek Akpınar, relating to the changes in the architectural image of the historical peninsula and the Turkification of Istanbul in the 1950s³; of Sibel Bozdoğan who explores Turkey's architecture and the modernization policy after World War I and the urban planning works in the 1950s⁴; of Pınar

² C. Bilsel, *İstanbul'un Dönüş ümleri: Prost Planlaması ve Modern Kenti Yaratmak*, In: İ. Y. Akpınar (ed.) *Osmanlı Baş kentinden Küreselleşen İstanbul'a: Mimarlık ve Kent*, İstanbul, Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2010, p. 49-66; *Idem*, "Les Transformations d'İstanbul": Henri Prost's planning of Istanbul (1936-1951), *AIZ Journal of Faculty of Architecture*, vol. 8, issue N 1, Spring 2011, p. 100-116; *Idem*, Dilemma of the Conservation of Cultural Heritage and Modernization in the Early Republican Planning of Istanbul, *World Heritage Istanbul Special Issue*, 2016, p. 86-99; *Idem*, Shaping a Modern City out of an Ancient Capital: Henri Prost's plan for the historical peninsula of Istanbul. *International Planning History Society Conference, 2004*, Cited by http://www-etsav.upc.es/personals/iphs2004/pdf/016_p.pdf - 05.05.2020; *Idem*, Remodelling the Imperial Capital in the Early Republican Era: The Representation of History in Henri Prost's Planning of Istanbul, In: J. Osmond, A. Cimдина (eds.) *Power and Culture: Identity, Ideology, Representation, Edizioni Plus*. Pisa, Pisa University Press, 2007, p. 95-115.

³ İ. Akpınar, Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula: Turkification of Istanbul in the 1950s, In: Meltem Gürel (ed.) *Mid-Century Modernism in Turkey: Architecture Across Cultures in the 1950s and 1960s*, Research in Architecture, Routledge-Taylor and Francis Group, London, September 2015. Cited by https://www.academia.edu/25589082/Urbanization_Represented_in_the_Historical_Peninsula_Turkification_of_Istanbul_in_the_1950s - 05.05.2020); *Idem*, The Rebuilding of Istanbul: The Role of Foreign Experts in the Urban Modernization in the Early Republican Years, In: *New Perspectives on Turkey, 2014 (Spring)*, p. 59-92; *Idem*, The Making of a Modern Pay-ı Taht in Istanbul: Menderes' Executions after Prost's Plan, In: C. Bilsel, P. Pinon (eds.) *From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henri Prost's Planning of Istanbul (1936-1951)*, Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 2010, p. 167-199 : https://www.academia.edu/2210966/Akpınar_I.Y._THE_MAKING_OF_A_MODERN_PAY-I_TAHT_IN_ISTANBUL_Menderes_executions_after_Prost_s_Plan_from_The_Imperial_Capital_to_the_Republican_Modern_City_Henri_Prost_s_Planning_of_Istanbul_1936-1951_C._Bilsel_P.Pinon_eds._İstanbul_%C4%B0stanbul_Research_Institute_2010_pp.167-199 - 05.05.2020); *Idem*, Menderes imar hareketleri Türkleştirme politikalarının bir parçası mıydı?: https://www.academia.edu/20411287/Menderes_imar_hareketleri_T%C3%BCrkle%C5%9Ffirme_politikalar%C4%B1n%C4%B1n_bir_par%C3%A7as%C4%B1_m%C4%B1yd%C4%B1 - 05.05.2020; *Idem*, The Making of a Turkish Metropolis: urban demolitions of Istanbul in the 1950s: http://www-etsav.upc.es/personals/iphs2004/pdf/002_p.pdf - 05.05.2020.

⁴ S. Bozdoğan, Turkey's postwar modernism: a retrospective overview of architecture urbanism, and politics in the 1950s, In: M. Gürel (ed.) *Mid-century modernism in Turkey. Architecture Across Cultures in the 1950s and 1960s*. Routledge, 2016, p. 9-26; *Idem*, Modernism

Aykaç who emphasizes the policy changes in the conservation of Ottoman and pre-Ottoman monuments⁵; as well as of Feroz Ahmad who deals with the issues of constructing a modern Turkish state and is among some of the earliest researchers of the rule of Adnan Menderes and the policies of the DP (1950-1960)⁶.

The proclamation of the republic in 1923 found Istanbul in ruins. A significant part of the old town had been devastated by fires as early as the end of the 19th century, leaving the burnt down neighborhoods abandoned and deserted over a prolonged period. The wealthier citizens of Istanbul preferred to leave the old town and relocate to the newly built neighborhoods north of the Golden Horn⁷. The prolonged wartime and the city's occupation lasting until 1922 also had a destructive impact on the urban infrastructure. Thus, in the start of the 1920s even the few architectural monuments that had been renovated during the Tanzimat period, such as Hagia Sophia, were in urgent need of renovation⁸. The measures aimed at introducing strict secularism and the consequent shutdown of religious orders and schools in 1925 further worsened the condition of the building stock in the old town, since after the state took ownership of the closed religious institutions' waqf properties, they were unkept and became uninhabitable⁹.

and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the early Republic, University of Washington Press, 2001. *Idem*, Nationalist Historiography and the "New Architecture" in the Early Republic, *Muqarnas*, 24, 2007, p. 199-221.

⁵ P. Aykaç, *The Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities and its role in the appropriation of Istanbul's diverse heritage as national heritage (1939–1953)*, vol. 62, May 2020, pp. 75-99; *Idem*, Musealization as an Urban Process: The Transformation of the Sultanahmet District in Istanbul's Historic Peninsula, *Journal of Urban History*, 45 (6), 2019, pp.1246-1272; *Idem*, Contesting the Byzantine Past: Four Hagia Sophias as Ideological Battlegrounds of Architectural Conservation in Turkey, *Heritage & Society*, 2018, Vol. 11 (2), pp. 151-178.

⁶ F. Ahmad, *The Making of the Modern Turkey*. London, Routledge, 1993; *Idem*, *Turkey: The Quest for Identity*. Oxford, Oneworld, UK, 2003; *Idem*, *Turkish Experiment in Democracy*. C. Hurst for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1977.

⁷ On the urban character and modernization of Istanbul in the 19th century see Z. Çelik, *The remaking of Istanbul. Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteen Century*. University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1993.

⁸ Ü. F. Açıkgöz, *On the Uses and Meanings of Architectural Preservation in Early Republican Istanbul (1923-1950)*, *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 1 (1:2), 2014, p. 167.

⁹ C. Birsal, *Shaping a Modern City out of an Ancient Capital: Henri Prost's plan for the historical peninsula of Istanbul*: <http://www-etsav.upc.es/personals/iphs2004/>

Simultaneously with the serious infrastructural problems, Istanbul lost its cosmopolitan character in the early 20th century, too. In the first place, the city's population experienced a significant drop to 690,587 people in 1927, which was roughly equivalent to half the inhabitants compared to pre-World War I levels. Over the course of the wars and immediately thereafter, a large number of non-Muslim subjects left Istanbul: whereas at the start of the 20th century the urban population was predominantly non-Muslim comprised of subjects of the Ottoman Empire and foreign citizens¹⁰, in 1935 the non-Muslims amounted to 26.0 percent, and towards the end of the examined period they were merely 10.0 percent. Moreover, the abolition of the Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire and the wartime oppression over the ethnic and religious minorities became driving factors for the emigration of European entrepreneurs, bankers, and merchants, with the withdrawal of foreign capital soon becoming tangible¹¹. The departure of a significant number of Ottoman subjects from religious minorities also contributed to the decline of the city's economy, as during recessions precisely members of minority groups played a key role in the revival and restoration of the different sectors of Istanbul's economic life¹².

In the early republican years, Istanbul's image in the eyes of the Turkish republic's new citizens also deteriorated. Due to the remaining, albeit greatly reduced, number of non-Muslims, as well as due to the memory of its imperial past, Istanbul was perceived as a "Byzantine", "Greek", and even "decadent"¹³ city, symbolic of the regressing empire and its ties with Islam¹⁴. The old Ottoman capital, with the aid of state propaganda, was counterposed to the new republican capital, which symbolized the nascent national culture and which had been assigned to

pdf/016_p.pdf - 25.07.2020.

¹⁰ In 1885, 44 percent of the Ottoman capital's population were Muslim, 41 percent were non-Muslim, and 15 percent were foreigners. In 1896, this ratio changed to 50 percent, 37 percent, and 12 percent respectively, while in 1927 they amounted to 64 percent, 27 percent, and 9 percent respectively. İ. İ. Tekeli, *The Development of the Istanbul Metropolitan Area: Urban Administration and Planning*. İ. Tekeli (ed.), 1994, p. 51.

¹¹ Ç. Keyder, The Setting, In: Ç. Kayder (ed.), *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*. Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 1999, p. 11.

¹² Tekeli, *The Development of Istanbul Metropolitan Area*, p. 68.

¹³ Akpınar. The Making of a Turkish Metropolis: http://www-etsav.upc.es/personals/iphs2004/pdf/002_p.pdf - 05.05.2020.

¹⁴ A. Bartu, Who Owns the Old Quarters? Rewriting Histories in Global Era. In: Ç. Kayder (ed.) *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 1999, p. 33; Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

eliminate the devotion to Ottoman traditions. Notwithstanding the expulsion of a large number of ethnic and religious minorities, Istanbul's stigmatization as a "city of foreigners" remained immutable practically during the entire interwar period, even though the historical peninsula neighborhoods Aksaray, Laleli, Şehzadebaşı, Süleymaniye, Vefa, Zeyrek, Çarşamba, Fatih, and Atikali were traditionally densely populated by Muslims. The same was true of the neighborhoods north of the Golden Horn – Sütlüce, Fındıklı, Kasımpaşa, and Tophane¹⁵. The belonging of their inhabitants to the national, however, also seemed compromised. According to Şerif Mardin, distancing Istanbul from the rest of the country began to develop during the Tanzimat when the Ottoman state saw the rise of a new phase of opposition and conflict between the provincial ulamas and the state bureaucracy in the capital. As a result, a dual structure of Turkish society emerged both in political and cultural terms. Elites in Istanbul formed a culture heavily influenced by the West, while the periphery preserved the national Islamic culture traditional for the Empire. Mardin perceives this confrontation between center and periphery as the gravest "social breakage" underlying Turkish politics and believes that this rift persisted regardless of the continuous modernization processes, including in the time of the republic¹⁶.

Thus, in the 1920s, Istanbul's Europeanized citizens, but also carriers of higher Islamic culture, found themselves isolated from the rest of the country. With the relocation of the capital in Ankara in October 1923, Istanbul lost its leading role as an economic and trading center and ceased to attract foreign and local entrepreneurs alike. Consequently, until World War II, the city's number of inhabitants grew insignificantly, mainly due to the natural growth of the population¹⁷.

The proclamation of Ankara as capital symbolized not only the break with the "Byzantine" and/or "Greek" city, but also the rupture with the Ottoman past. Due to this anti-Greek and anti-Ottoman discourse, as well as due to the fact that prior to 1927 Atatürk did not visit officially the city even once, some scholars

¹⁵ Tekeli, *The Development of Istanbul Metropolitan Area*, p. 45.

¹⁶ Ş. Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset- Makaleler 1*. İstanbul, İletişim yayınları, 1990, p. 32-33.

¹⁷ H. T. Örmecioglu and E. Kamacı, Istanbul 1956 and Menderes Operations, In: *5th International Postgraduate Research Conference in the Built and Human Environment*. Lowry, The Stanford Quays, United Kingdom, 2005, p. 807.

claim that Istanbul had been deliberately neglected by Turkey's first president¹⁸, who personified all state power as well. Other representatives of Turkish historiography find this hypothesis unacceptable and maintain that the neglect of Istanbul was not purposefully planned and was not due to a negative personal attitude on behalf of Atatürk, but was inevitably caused by the lack of sufficient funds for urban investments¹⁹. Another hypothesis suggests that the delayed republican intervention in Istanbul's architectural revival and modernization could be explained by the fact that the "creative destruction" à la Haussman was not appropriate for the imperial city because "the dense, rich, and multi-layered historical patrimony of Istanbul was much more significant for the Turkish nation-state than was the pre-1850 urban environment of Paris for Napoleon III and his regime"²⁰. The last statement, however, finds grounds in the policy aimed at transforming the Ottoman cultural and historical heritage into a national Turkish one, but this was not typical of the first decade of the republic. Until the start of the 1930s, Turkish authorities prioritized the construction of a new capital, while Ottoman and Seljuk antiquities were not perceived as valuable historical monuments that ought to be restored or at the very least to not be demolished²¹. The same goes for the Byzantine and ancient heritage of the city.

Without denying the validity of the opinions cited above explaining the belated modernization initiatives with respect to Istanbul, and keeping in mind that these are not mutually exclusive, I should point to the fact that in the early years of the republic the urgent need of restoring urban infrastructure was almost entirely ignored by the new authorities. In the absence of significant urban modernization projects, some restorations of singular historical monuments are the sole examples of Istanbul's development²². The restoration works were entrusted to the Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities created in 1917

¹⁸ See Ch. 3 "The Neglected City 1923-1933", In: M. Gül, *The emergence of modern Istanbul. Transformation and Modernisation of a City*. London-New York, I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2009, p. 72-91.

¹⁹ Bilsel, *Les Transformations d'Istanbul*, p. 100-101.

²⁰ Açıkgöz, *On the Uses and Meanings*, p. 169.

²¹ M. Dinler, Constructing, Remaking, and Remembering: Historic Preservation in the Early Decades of the Turkish Republic, *Studi e Ricerche di Storia dell'Architettura: Rivista dell'Associazione Italiana Storici dell'Architettura*, N 2, I-2017, p. 82.

²² Such are, for instance, the renovation of Hagia Sophia's dome and the restoration of the Blue Mosque Sultan Ahmed. See N. Altinyildiz, The Architectural Heritage of Istanbul and the Ideology of Preservation, In: *Muqarnas XXIII: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*. XXIV, 2007, p. 281-306.

that still operates in Istanbul. The task of the Commission was to research and register historical monuments while also supervising the restoration works²³. A complete reconstruction of Istanbul, however, was not attempted by the early republican authorities.

Through such a treatment of the old imperial capital, the new authorities intended to neutralize the elites loyal to the Ottoman rule that had maintained certain positions and continued to exert influence over Istanbul. The pro-Islamic profile of Mustafa Kemal's opposition in the early years of the republic made it very difficult to objectively understand the conflict between the new statesmen and the old elites in the imperial capital. In fact, a large part of the mentioned old elites were from the Ottoman military circles, people with liberal attitudes and modern thinking who had backed up Kemal during the War of Independence (1919-1922). Following the end of the military actions, they actually objected that, following the overthrow of the absolutist monarchy, an absolutist republic under the autocratic rule of Mustafa Kemal was taking shape. The conflict was aggravated by the social differences between the new leaders in Ankara and their opponents in Istanbul. Turkey's first president, as well as a majority of his supporters, originated from the provincial middle class whose members in the years of the late Ottoman Empire chose the military profession as an opportunity for financial security and advancement in society. They lacked the deep loyalty towards the dynasty which also made them prone to radicalism and populist reforms²⁴. Mustafa Kemal insisted on the imposition of a radically new ideology and symbols that would allow Turkey to quickly make up for its lag behind the West, while the introduction of parties, syndicates, independent press, and freedom of speech was postponed for an undefined point in the future when Turkish society would have reached the required level of development. Kemal's opponents, on the other hand, originated from the high echelons of the imperial city, and their families were closely tied with and personally indebted to the Ottoman dynasty that they appreciated greatly. They insisted the empire be saved through reforms that were to be based on continuity and tradition²⁵. Thus, in the first decade of the republic, the opposition consisting of representatives of the former Ottoman administration and aristocracy, the cosmopolitanism of the city, the foreign influence to which it had been and continued to be subjugated, as well as the minorities clustered there, were treated as an obstacle to the enforcement of the new nationalist ideology.

²³ Aykaç, *The Commission for the Preservation*, p. 80.

²⁴ Ahmad, *Making of modern*, p. 35-37.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

According to Ç. Keyder, the new rulers in the culturally “unpolluted” capital of Ankara, notwithstanding the large majority of them had until recently been residents of the imperial city, pretended to look at Istanbul with suspicion, as a horn of corruption and intrigue with an ambivalent loyalty to the nationalistic project and adds: “The city seemed to represent a temptation they tried very hard to keep away from: Mustafa Kemal did not visit it for five years in an attempt to resist the siren’s call”²⁶.

As far as the architectural monuments preserving the memory of the imperial glory were concerned, the republican authorities adopted the practice to transform the representative Ottoman buildings into museums²⁷. The same was true also for pre-Ottoman buildings and for Byzantine churches in particular which during the Ottoman Empire had been used as mosques²⁸. One of the emblematic measures pointing to that was the proclamation of the sultan palace Topkapı as a museum only five months after the proclamation of the republic: clear sign for the Kemalists’ intention to leave in history the recently destroyed Ottoman Empire as quickly as possible and to obliterate its political significance²⁹.

Ankara naturally turned into the city that had to fulfill the modernization goals of the republic, understood in Kemalist ideology unambiguously as Europeanization. The authorities used urban planning as a tool for forging a material manifestation of the nation-state’s new identity. The opposite was also true: urban planning aimed to create a physical environment and public spaces to propel forward the social modernization of Turkish citizens and to contribute to the imposition of the European way of life³⁰.

At first glance counterintuitively, Istanbul’s urban population had turned out to impede the realization of Kemalism’s Europeanization program, although the Europeanization process had begun specifically there in the first half of the 19th century. However, the reforms that had been launched in the 1920s sought to secularize traditional Ottoman society, to build up strong national awareness, and to ensure the Turkish citizens’ loyalty to the republic by positioning themselves

²⁶ Keyder, *The Setting*, p. 11.

²⁷ On this topic see P. Aykaç, Musealization as an Urban Process: The Transformation of the Sultanahmet District in Istanbul’s Historic Peninsula. *Journal of Urban History*, 45(6), 2019, pp. 1246-1272.

²⁸ P. Aykaç, Contesting the Byzantine Past: Four Hagia Sophias as Ideological Battlegrounds of Architectural Conservation in Turkey, *Heritage & Society*, 2018, Vol.11(2), p. 151-178.

²⁹ Açıkgöz, *On the Uses and Meanings*, p. 170.

³⁰ Bilsel, *Remodelling the Imperial*, p. 98.

in direct opposition to the goals the Ottomans had been pursuing until recently. The new authorities considered modernization based on the real experience from Istanbul to be impossible insofar as the Westernized population in the city was predominantly non-Muslim and was considered parasitic to the “true” nation and as “comprador” in relation to the economy. The same doubts arose from the foreign Muslims living in Istanbul who were perceived as unreliable and dishonest. Turkish-speaking Muslims in turn also appeared compromised because of their devotion to Islamic traditions that were automatically associated with the imperial obscurantism without taking into account the significant civilizational nuances. According to the republican authorities, the best-case scenario would require Turkish citizens to be “fiercely irreligious” and to embody the positive aspects of traditional values while avoiding their vicious practices, i.e. they ought to be ready and willing to be injected with the ideas of positivism and progress³¹.

To illustrate the nature of the republic, Turkish authorities strove to keep Ankara away from Istanbul’s cosmopolitan influence. In their view, Ankara’s society had to be homogenous and Turkified to ensure the cohesion of the republican “rational national order” with the support of the national systems of communication and cultural dissemination. In other words, the resources of the entire state apparatus were employed to secure the formation of a national culture that would bring forth a fusion of its cultural diversity in all its complexity arising from the continuous cohabitation of various identities still present on Turkey’s territory. Istanbul and Ankara ended up being counterposed as symbols of tradition and modernity respectively, since the imposition of the “enlightened national order” needed the contrast with the civilizational “others”, i.e. the elites in the old capital. The new was favored and accentuated not as a standalone symbol of progress, but rather in combination with the contrasting image of the old, already discredited as marker of backwardness and obscurantism³². The marginalization of the Europeanization attempt of Istanbul, along with the dismissal of the high Islamic culture whose pillars were the Ottoman elites in the city, became the distinguishing features of the new nationalistic ideal that thoroughly ignored the incompatibility between these two existing realities and led to such idealization of the Kemalist modernization project that it became unfeasible³³.

As for the intentions of the early republican authorities specifically towards Istanbul’s imperial architecture, they were illustrated by the language of the

³¹ Keyder, *The Setting*, p. 9-10.

³² Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, p. 62.

³³ Keyder, *The Setting*, p. 10.

historians and architects of the time who continued to study and research the imperial city's historical heritage. S. Bozdoğan notes the "remarkable tact" of their way of expression that already abided by the official republican discourse, as they listed architectural monuments by feigning their Turkish identity, avoiding the dynastic classification and, quite resolutely, the word "Ottoman". The Seljuk and Ottoman antiquities were presented in official documents and publications as evidence of the "eternal Turkish intellect" that manifested independently of these two dynasties³⁴. Thus, the republican paradigm sought to reformulate the Ottoman architectural heritage by imposing Turkish genealogy on it and by distinguishing it from the Byzantine, as well as from the various types of Islamic architecture³⁵.

Namely this aspiration provided an opportunity for the members of the created in the 1930s Commission for the Protection of Old Monuments to attempt the conservation of historical monuments by aligning them with Turkishness emphasizing and feigning their Turkish origins. A detailed report of the Commission from 1935 repeatedly insisted that the most notable creations in the history of humanity could be found on Turkish territories and that analogues of these monuments could not be found anywhere else in the world. The paper, completely in line with the early Kemalist propaganda, condemned with contention the Ottoman mentality for giving away the antique artifacts to foreigners without hesitation, but with a curtesy to the president it continued: "The evil mentality of the Ottoman state is completely dismantled by the Republican will. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk initiated the First step of this dismantle"³⁶. In reality, such a demonstration of the nationalist anthropomorphism actually allowed urban planners and renovators to prevent the destruction of historical buildings by linking them to the personal opinion and will of Mustafa Kemal. To this end, the authors of the report cited a telegram sent from Atatürk to the prime minister İsmet İnönü in 1931 in which he commented on the state of Ottoman and Seljuk monuments and artifacts in various cities in Anatolia. Some contemporary researchers interpret the telegram as the president's concern for the state of the architectural heritage in Central Anatolia with which he catalyzed the immediate creation of the relevant institutions to protect it³⁷. M. Dinler, however, points out

³⁴ Bozdoğan, *Nationalist Historiography*, p. 199-221.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³⁶ Cited as translated In: Dinler, *Constructing, Remaking, and Remembering*, p. 89.

³⁷ B. S. Coşkun, Scraping the layers: Tahsin Öz and his stylistic restorations in Topkapı Palace Museum. *TU A|Z*, Vol 15, N 3, November 2018, p. 2-3: <https://www.journalagent.com>

that the telegram did not refer to a single monument in Istanbul which, of course, cannot be considered incidents and served as further evidence for the intentional marginalization of the city³⁸.

At the backdrop of the picture outlined above, since the start of the 1930s the attitude towards the old imperial capital gradually began to change, and the new nation-state ideology began to appropriate Ottoman historical patrimony³⁹. This trend strengthened towards the end of the decade which saw the start of the preparations celebrating the quincentenary of Istanbul's conquest. Whereas until then the imperial capital had been presented as a historical period different from that of the Turkish civilization – a period remote in the collective memory of the new citizens, in the course of the 1930s the imperial past began to be increasingly reexamined in light of the nationalist present and to be integrated therein. Such a practice was in line with the dramatic efforts to elaborate the Turkish historical thesis, which, like the transformation of the Ottoman city into a Turkish one, went through many twists and turns and a number of much more serious staggers⁴⁰. In that sense, the renovation of the architectural monuments in Istanbul acquired the significance of something more than a routine restoration of the destroyed building stock. These monuments were perceived as material participants in the common historical narrative which transformed the imperial heritage into a national one, even though the debate around which of them deserved to be preserved as material evidence for the national history was lengthy and inconsistent mainly due to frequent changes and ambiguities in the interpretation of the “national”. The poorly organized institutional framework, the grave disagreements between the various institutions, and the incongruences between theory and practice made this transformative narrative even more complex and difficult to synchronize with the Kemalist general ideologic program⁴¹.

During the same period, Istanbul's urban governors began to attempt a complete restoration and modernization of the city. An incentive, and also an argument for a similar decision, was provided by the damage on new Turkey's international prestige as a result of the negative impressions of foreign visitors to Istanbul vis-à-vis the condition of the urban environment and historical

com/itujfa/pdfs/ITUJFA_15_3_1_12.pdf - 05.05.2020.

³⁸ Dinler, *Constructing, Remaking, and Remembering*, p. 89.

³⁹ Bozdoğan, *Nationalist Historiography*, p. 199-221.

⁴⁰ See Umit Uzer. *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism. Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity*. The University of Utah Press 2016.

⁴¹ Açıkgöz, *On the Uses and Meanings*, p. 167-168.

monuments⁴². The start of the reconstruction works was influenced by the presence of Greek, Armenian, Jewish, and other communities that still dwelled in the city. According to republican bureaucracy, regarding international prestige, these communities fostered vulnerabilities that threatened the implementation of the nationalist project involving discriminatory policies towards non-Muslim Turkish citizens. Striving to solidify its rights over the territory of the nation state and mainly its European part, the government of M. Kemal needed material evidence of the historical presence of the Turkish nation in the European territory of Turkey. In that respect, the imperial monuments gained added value as evidence for the centennial Turkish presence in Europe and especially in Istanbul⁴³.

Some researchers divide into two stages the period of urban development works relating to Istanbul's architectural renovation. They consider 1932, the beginning of the first stage when the district administration announced a competition for an urban plan for modernization of Istanbul, and in 1933 invited four architects to present their projects: Henri Prost, Jacques Henri Lambert, Donat-Alfred Agache, and Hermann Ehlgötz. The jury, comprised of Turkish bureaucrats, selected the proposal of the German architect H. Ehlgötz that they found "more realistic"⁴⁴. It is worth noting, nevertheless, that the German architect's project was never fulfilled.

It would be more accurate if one considers 1936 the start of the works on Istanbul's urban modernization when the French architect Henri Prost was invited by Istanbul's mayor, Muhittin Üstündağ, to develop a general urban planning blueprint⁴⁵. The Turkish researcher C. Birsal points out that some scholars attribute the invitation for the French architect to Mustafa Kemal himself⁴⁶, but she highlights that until now no undisputable archival documents have surfaced in support of this claim⁴⁷. The reason for the emergence of such a thesis in historiography is probably the fact that in the interwar period changes in Turkey often were imposed as a one-man decision of Atatürk. That is why important statesmanlike decisions are often attributed to the personal initiative of the first president of the republic. His name, in some cases misleading, is used as a synonym

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁴⁴ Akpınar, *The Rebuilding of Istanbul*, p. 60.

⁴⁵ Regarding the invitation extended to Henri Prost, see Birsal, *İstanbul'un Dönüş ümleri*, p. 49-50.

⁴⁶ Akpınar, *The making the Modern*.

⁴⁷ Birsal, *Remodelling the Imperial*, p. 99; *Idem*, *Les Transformations d'Istanbul*, p. 103.

for power and statehood in general. On the other hand, the significant authority that Atatürk enjoyed frequently encourages researchers to seek and emphasize his direct intervention in important state matters, especially if they can be assessed as visionary.

Similarly to the prior projects elaborated by the formerly cited European architects, the H. Prost project is characterized by Haussmann-style boulevards and powerful visual effects resembling urban spaces in Western Europe⁴⁸. Unlike the earlier projects, however, that of Prost actually entered into execution. In the period between 1936 and 1951, the French architect worked on developing the general blueprint of the European and the Asian parts of Istanbul and on the coastal plans for the Bosphorus, and began the execution of the ten-year urban development plan. His decision to focus on a “plan to concentrate the city” instead of on a “plan for its expansion”, which had been preferred in Paris, was representative of Prost’s approach. The French architect made this decision on the basis of his belief that the historical core of the city would continue to be a center of agglomeration, therefore necessitating the construction of transport arteries through the old town that would facilitate traffic and would connect Istanbul’s separate areas⁴⁹. Simultaneously, he emphasized the necessity of reducing the heavy population density of the historical neighborhoods in order to sanitize them. The French urbanist intended to reorganize the existing street network and the parceling of the old neighborhoods that did not resonate with the aesthetics and purpose of the new streets and alleys he had planned⁵⁰. Researchers point out that regardless of the inevitable sacrifice of the Ottoman architectural heritage, Prost imposed building regulations and restrictions that allowed for the preservation of the city’s historical silhouette⁵¹.

As to the urbanist’s desire to preserve the notable architectural monuments, a key role therein played the work of the aforementioned Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities that until 1941 enlisted 797 monuments, giving priority to the ones located along the main transport arteries outlined in the general urban development plan by the French urbanist⁵². H. Prost managed to preserve the

⁴⁸ Akpınar, *The Rebuilding of Istanbul*, p. 60.

⁴⁹ Bilsel, *İstanbul’un Dönüş ümleri*, p. 55.

⁵⁰ Bilsel, *Les Transformations d’Istanbul*, p. 108-109.

⁵¹ Bilsel, *Shaping a Modern City*.

⁵² Aykaç, *The Commission for the Preservation*, p. 98.

significant monuments from the Byzantine and Ottoman periods, but disrupted significantly the Ottoman urban fabric in the name of “modernization”⁵³.

The end of the 1940s marked an important change in the modernization strategy of the republican authorities vis-à-vis Istanbul, and it was linked to the preparation for celebrating the quincentenary of Istanbul’s conquest by sultan Mehmed II Fatih. The main works for the preparation had to do with the renovation of a series of specially selected historical monuments connected with the period of Mehmed II’s rule. It was intended to restore the complex of Topkapı saray and the imperial walls (Sur-u Sultani) around it, the mosque Fatih with its adjacent complex, the fortress Yedikule and the complex Rumeli Hisarı, as well as other mosques, fountains, etc. The restoration works began to be discussed as a “nation-wide obligation”, while Istanbul was already defined by some intellectuals as “the Turks’ most significant national creation”⁵⁴.

Moreover, the decision to preserve historical heritage involved not only Ottoman monuments but also Byzantine ones that had been restored during the time of rule of Mehmed II, including Hagia Sophia, Hagia Irene, Kariye Camii (The Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora) and İmrahor Camii (The Monastery of Stoudios)⁵⁵. Thus, over the course of the festivity preparations and contrary to the earlier attempts by the official Turkish historiography to examine the Byzantine past as a period of existence of “continuous Turkish culture”, the Byzantine architectural and cultural heritage was already perceived as “conquered heritage”, a heritage that could be associated with the narrative of the “national”. By the force of this new reading of the historical past, all pre-Ottoman monuments were redefined as national, while the historiographic narrative for the conquest of the city gradually integrated the Byzantine architectural heritage, too⁵⁶.

During World War II, regardless of the economic stagnation, Henri Prost continued working with the support of Istanbul’s mayor, Lütfi Kırdar, who remained in this position until 1950. While first contracted to spend in Istanbul two months per year, the French urbanist remained continuously to work in the city between 1941-1947. Large-scale projects, such as the opening of Atatürk boulevard, the organization of the Eminönü square, and the development of the Taksim area were completed during wartime⁵⁷. H. Prost carried out his works

⁵³ Bilsel, *Shaping a Modern City*, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Aykaç, *The Commission for the Preservation*, p. 84.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁵⁷ Bilsel, *Istanbul’ un Dönüş ümleri*, p. 51.

in the time of a single-party system when there was practically no opportunity to conduct public debate and taking into account the opinion of the Turkish professional guilds dealing with urban planning. With the introduction of the multi-party system from the mid-1940s, H. Prost became the target of sharp criticisms mainly by Istanbul's professional circles⁵⁸. The reason for that resided in the fact that Prost's plan would in practice require a full-scale renovation of the historical fabric of the old town which already often resulted in the inevitable destruction of Ottoman architecture. Hence, in the start of the 1950s Prost was ousted, as the French architect was "foreign to the city", and Istanbul needed Turkish expertise⁵⁹.

Protests against the changes in Istanbul's urban environment arose immediately after the introduction of the multiparty system in Turkey. The slogan "Enough", symbolizing the desire to end the preceding rule over the city, was one of the most significant messages of the oppositional DP in the election campaigns of the 1940s⁶⁰. Even in 1945 while still a member of parliament for the Republican People's Party (RPP), Menderes sharply criticized the government's policy towards the provinces. He publicly announced that this policy was inspired by "Nazi Germany's Erbhof regulations" and insisted that it erected an unsurmountable barrier between cities and villages and would cause the country to regress⁶¹. Guided by these convictions, during his rule he led a policy aimed at improving the standard of living in small settlements, but, unlike the RPP, he no longer aspired to retain the population from the periphery in their native provincial regions⁶². On the contrary, Menderes actively tolerated the migration of rural population to the cities and to Istanbul in particular.

A decisive turn in the government policy towards the old capital occurred after the parliamentary elections in 1950 when for the first time since the proclamation of the republic an opposition party entered the government. As soon as he took office, the new DP government significantly changed the state policy towards Istanbul⁶³. The Prime Minister Menderes began to talk about

⁵⁸ Akpınar, *The Rebuilding of Istanbul*, p. 61.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁶⁰ Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

⁶¹ Gül, *The Emergence*, p. 127-128.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Akpınar, *The Making of a Modern Pay-ı Taht in Istanbul*.

the old capital as “Turkey’s pearl” and compared his modernization plans to the “recapture of the city”, thereby clearly referring to the Ottoman past⁶⁴.

It should be mentioned, though, that the DP’s Islamic discourse that revived Istanbul’s Ottoman past was a trend aiming to stimulate the Turkish nationalist project, not to resurrect the empire. The pro-Islamic intellectuals in the 1950s were more concerned with how to apply the principle of secularism and insisted on softening its practical meaning. They rightly gave the example of the French model of secularism which enforced a strict separation between state and religion, while in Turkey the state imposed complete control over religious matters and institutions.

According to the new reading of Ottoman history, all things Ottoman became symbolic of the Islamic nature of the nation and turned into a powerful political tool, used to dispute the strict Kemalist rules on secular endeavors⁶⁵, but not the nation-state.

By tolerating Istanbul, the DP sought to legitimize its rule over the entire country, as it turned the city into informal capital for the new government. This step was needed, since the voters from Ankara and the cities symbolizing Turkey’s secular path of development continued to support the RPP⁶⁶. Unlike them, people from Anatolia were repulsed by Atatürk’s party that ruled over 27 years because it had imposed complete political control over popular Islam⁶⁷. The state had failed to respect their cultural values, while the policy of secularism had never been explained to them and they had never understood its benefits⁶⁸. A. Menderes won the elections predominantly with the votes of these religious Muslims from Anatolia. Therefore, the shift of the state’s center from Ankara to Istanbul became a strategically crucial component of the DP’s new ideological line which needed “an urban showcase of democratic Turkey” to impress both domestic and foreign observers alike⁶⁹.

The process of transforming the “Byzantine” and “decadent” Istanbul into “Turkey’s pearl” during Menderes’ rule was carried out along three main lines. First,

⁶⁴ Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

⁶⁵ Bartu, *Who Owns the Old Quarters?*, p. 38.

⁶⁶ For the domestic political tension between DP and RNP and their electorates, see Ahmad, *The making of Modern Turkey*, p. 109-112.

⁶⁷ A. T. Kuyucu, Ethno-religious “unmixing” of „Turkey. *Nations and Nationalism* 11 (3), 2005, p. 372.

⁶⁸ Ahmad, *The making of Modern Turkey*, p. 105.

⁶⁹ Örmecioglu and Kamacı, *Istanbul 1956*, p. 808.

this was the promotion of migration from rural areas and the change of the social composition of the urban population in order to make the city Turkish. Secondly, I should mention the measures to expel “internal others”: ethnic and religious minorities, and to this end the government promoted populist Islam among the newly arrived citizens of Istanbul. Last but not least, the revision of Prost’s urban development plan and the consequent large-scale constructions involving the destruction of a large number of historical buildings were revised⁷⁰.

I should point out that whereas the DP’s leaders actively insisted on a repeal of the undemocratic laws up until their coming to power, once in office, contrary to their prior intentions, they introduced repressive legislation limiting the little political freedom that Turkish citizens had enjoyed⁷¹. Menderes’ domestic policy was characterized by heavy pressure over the opposition, fierce constraints over the freedom of speech and the press, and a particularly authoritarian rule. The government regulated the economy strictly and imposed controls over foreign investments and imports because of which, according to Ç. Keyder, Istanbul turned into a “decisively provincial city”, while the cultural interaction with the rest of the world was monopolized by the state elite⁷².

One of the first measures undertaken to transform Istanbul’s urban appearance was the restructuring of its population’s social composition. For the sake of objectivity, it is worth mentioning that waves of nationalism and aggression towards Istanbul’s minorities arose as early as the war period. The most striking evidence thereof was the introduction of a wealth tax, “Varlık Vergisi”, in 1942⁷³ that was defended as extraordinary economic measures during the war. The collection of the tax in practice evolved into an effective intimidation tool against non-Muslims⁷⁴ who soon after began to emigrate.

The increased nationalism and anti-cosmopolitanism during the war years brought back the sharpness of the opposition between the two emblematic cities of Turkey: “Ankara is the city of the future, Istanbul is the city of the past,” wrote *La Turquie Kemaliste* in 1943. The negative tone regarding Istanbul’s ethnic

⁷⁰ Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

⁷¹ Ahmad, *The making of modern*, p. 111.

⁷² Keyder, *The Setting*, p. 12.

⁷³ See A. Aktar, “Tax me to the end of my Life!”: Anatomy of an anti-minority tax legislation (1942 -1943), In: B. C Fortna, S. Katsikas, D. Kamouzis and P. Konortas (eds.) *State-nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945*. Routledge, 2013, p. 188-220.

⁷⁴ See the memories of S. Nowill, *Constantinople and Istanbul: 72 Years of Life in Turkey*. Matador, Leicestershire 2011, p. 77.

diversity is indicative of Ankara's nationalist stance at the time: "the average visitor who has spent a few days rushing from Hagia Sofia to the Great Walls and quickly around the old Hippodrome goes home to tell the folks about Turkey. He is no better equipped than the stay-at-homes who get their ideas out of novels about the sultans. For in Istanbul he has probably eaten Russian food, got his views on the government from a Greek porter, been guided by an Armenian courier, and concentrated exclusively on the relics of a past now intentionally forgotten by the average Turk, who looks ahead to better days. He who really wants to know the Turkey of today and tomorrow should take the first train for Ankara"⁷⁵.

The escalation of nationalism and the wartime measures eroded the trust of religious minorities in government policy, hence immediately after the war a large number of entrepreneurs left Istanbul. Their emigration was followed by another change crucial for Istanbul's social composition: during the war, profit from the black market created a new group of wealthy Turkish provincialists who, "in search of aristocracy", settled in Istanbul⁷⁶. They were followed by a large rural population, which, in search of realization on the labor market rather than of opportunities for a civilized way of life, also came to the imperial city and fell among the poorest strata of Istanbul's society⁷⁷. As a result, in the late 1940s the daily newspapers already attested that "more and more, Istanbul is looking like an Anatolian village"⁷⁸.

The population inflow from Anatolia grew in the early 1950s when, along with the migration induced by the hasty industrialization, the Menderes government further deliberately stimulated migration from villages towards Istanbul. The city was flooded by Turks arriving from Anatolia, and over the decade, its population almost doubled. This policy corresponded with the DP's program aiming to Turkicize Istanbul which the party leaders had already propagandized during the national and municipal elections campaigns⁷⁹.

The city's rapid expansion worsened its architectural features. The accelerated and poorly planned stream of migrants resulted in the emergence of a large number of unregulated buildings called "gecekondu" ["squatters"]. In 1951,

⁷⁵ Cited from Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, p. 66-67.

⁷⁶ Keyder, *The Setting*, p. 13.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ S. Aslant, T. Erman, The transformation of the Urban Property: Once Upon a Time There Were Gecekondu in Istanbul. In: D. Ö. Koçak, O. K. Koçak (ed.) *Whose City Is That? Culture, Design, Spectacle and Capital in Istanbul*, Cambridge scholars, 2014, p. 98.

⁷⁹ Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

the number of gecekondu reached 8,500, while the mayor Muhittin Üstündağ, who simultaneously occupied the position of municipal governor (wali), attracted growing criticisms⁸⁰. The emergence of entire illegal migrant neighborhoods on other citizens' private property and the absence of municipal services there faced the city governors with serious issues. In an attempt to control the situation, a decision was made to demolish the illegal constructions built on private property or on territories of religious foundations, while providing their dwellers with new terrain. The illegal buildings on state property were sold to their dwellers at low prices and subsequently legalized. The same "policy" would still be applied until the end of the 1950s, yet would never be strictly enforced. Thus, the state implicitly sent the message to the dwellers of illegal settlements if they would be patient enough to wait, their homes would be legalized⁸¹. Towards the start of the 1960s, 40 percent of dwellings in Istanbul were gecekondu, housing 45 percent of the city's population⁸².

The inflow of migrants further affected the historical parts of the city that were transformed into smaller areas with cheap dwellings built to house the newcomers, because of which the old inhabitants gradually left the historical center. This process worsened and even destroyed the traditional urban planning and social structures that the rulers did not perceive as cultural wealth. An acute conflict erupted between the old Istanbulites and the newly arrived citizens, illustrated by the slogan "There is no other Istanbul!" with which the locals urged the migrants to avoid bringing their provincial culture to the city⁸³. The poorly planned stimulus towards the migrant flow and weak government regulation were perceived as "unhealthy" by the migrants themselves who remembered that after they had been made redundant in their farms, they had been forced to relocate to the cities, forming into marginalized communities there⁸⁴.

Old Istanbulites were outraged by the immigrants' low culture and complained that Pera (called by the Ottomans Beyoğlu – a name that it kept during the republic as well) once had smelled of "perfume and sesame", while

⁸⁰ Aslant, Erman, *The transformation of the Urban Property*, p. 100.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 100-101.

⁸³ D. Ö. Koçak and O. K. Koçak, Is There Any Other Istanbul?, In: D. Ö. Koçak, O. K. Koçak (ed.) *Whose City Is That? Culture, Design, Spectacle and Capital in Istanbul*, Cambridge scholars, 2014, p. 2.

⁸⁴ J. Tölay. Rewriting National Narratives through the Study of Past Migrations: Turkey's History of Migrations, *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 17, 2018, p. 208.

after the invasion of the rural population already “smelled of lahmacun”⁸⁵. For them, Istanbul was already a “lost city”, “conquered by the Anatolian invasion”. Public spaces, where one could already see large numbers of veiled women and men in traditional attire, became a counterpoint to the memory of Beyoğlu where “back in the day one could only encounter well dressed and groomed ladies and gentlemen”⁸⁶. Some even dreamt to return to “Pera’s golden days” when all Jews, French, Greeks, and Armenians lived together and gloomily acknowledged that the elegant sophistication from the past was unattainable, as the aristocratic spirit of the area had been gone for good along with its people⁸⁷.

It was namely the spirit of Beyoğlu that Menderes had set out to destroy even with his coming to power. In the beginning of the construction works, he gave an unambiguous statement to the press on the subject: “Is this how Istanbul should have been? A pearl of a city in the world? Our beautiful mosques are lost in [traffic] jams like antiques dumped into junk! ... All the life it has today passes on a single avenue in Beyoğlu. The first thing to be done: Istanbul against Beyoğlu.”⁸⁸

The slogan “Istanbul against Beyoğlu” turned into the motto of Menderes’ modernization plans which clearly testifies for the new government’s zeal to achieve a religious and ethnic homogenization of the cosmopolitan Istanbul⁸⁹. In fact, Beyoğlu even in the Tanzimat times had been used as a micromodel for experimental constructions in order to develop a strategy for Europeanizing the imperial city’s appearance. Even then, the area had turned into Istanbul’s representative European neighborhood, dominated by symbols of the modern lifestyle, such as offices, banks, theatres, hotels, universal stores, and multi-story residential buildings. Given that Beyoğlu was the place where the old Islamic harmony had been disrupted for the first time, it is not surprising that the Prime Minister’s pro-Islamic discourse confronted precisely this neighborhood with his intentions to Turkicize and Islamize Istanbul. For Menderes, transforming Beyoğlu, inhabited traditionally by non-Muslims, was symbolic of the assimilation

⁸⁵ The lahmacun is a thin flatbread topped with mince meat and spices, characteristic for the Middle East and by the 1950s prepared only in the Eastern regions of Turkey. After the migrants brought it to the cities, regardless of the initial sharp reaction, the lahmacun became popular in the whole country, and today it is even advertised as the “traditional” Turkish pizza.

⁸⁶ A. Bartu, *Who Owns the Old Quarters?*, p. 37.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁸⁸ Cited as translated In: Akpınar, *The Making of Modern pay-i taht in Istanbul*, p. 68.

⁸⁹ Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

of the “decadent”, “Byzantine”, and “Greek” city into the nation-state. This policy supported the new paradigm of the “national” according to which the nation was linked with the glorious Ottoman past, understood unambiguously as “Islamic”, while the Islamic civilization code was already a crucial marker of the Turkish national identity. Regardless of this notable change in the Kemalist national project, however, Menderes’ populist Islam denounced not only non-Muslims but also all “domestic others”. Among the latter were Kurds.

The tone of Menderes’ propaganda led to the emergence of “popular nationalism” with a strong religious inclination which turned out to be exceptionally effective in mobilizing the electorate dissatisfied with militant secularism. “Popular nationalism” was appealing mostly to the constantly incoming rural population for whom non-Muslims, with their higher social standing, cosmopolitan nature, and religion, became reason of dissatisfaction and hate⁹⁰. Migrants from Anatolia quickly started to associate religious minorities with business practices banned by Islam, such as usury and immoral profiteering, for instance, and perceived them as “dangerous”, “amoral”, and “giaour” [“infidel”]. Frequent complaints mentioned that they inhabited Istanbul’s most beautiful areas and owned “too many houses”⁹¹. The social tension deliberately fomented by government policy, along with the economic crisis from the mid-1950s, nurtured the conditions for carrying out the infamous attacks over the private property, temples, and even graveyards of the city’s religious minorities⁹². Although the riots from September 6-7, 1955 went under the motto “Cyprus is Turkish!” and were linked to the Turco-Greek conflict over the Mediterranean island, attacks targeted not only the Greek minority, but also Armenians, Jews, Bulgarians, Roma – in brief, all “domestic others”⁹³.

⁹⁰ A. T. Kuyucu, Ethno-religious “unmixing” of “Turkey”: 6-7 September riots as a case in Turkish nationalism. In: *Nations and Nationalism*, 11 (3), 2005, 362.

⁹¹ Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

⁹² One of the most heated debates during the judicial process against Menderes after the 1960 coup was related to the pogrom from September 6-7, 1955. The military court claimed that the DP government organized the riots to pressure Greece to concede in the disputes around Cyprus. The court presented convincing evidence that the government actively took part in the planning of the riots that went out of control and erupted into mass hysteria. Kuyucu, Ethno-religious “unmixing”, p. 362.

⁹³ See in more detail D. Güven, Riots against the Non-Muslims of Turkey: 6/7 September 1955 in the context of demographic engineering, *European Journal of Turkish studies*, 12. 2011: <https://journals.openedition.org/ejts/4538>; S. Arioba, The Istanbul Pogrom of 6/7 September 1955, and its impact on the Turkish Armenian Community. https://www.academia.edu/8550565/The_Istanbul_Pogrom_of_6_7_September_1955_and_its_impact_on_the_Turkish_Armenian_Community - 05.05.2020.

According to A. T. Kuyucu, the most important conclusion that can be drawn from these events is that “the conscious manipulation of people’s sentiments by ethnic entrepreneurs, state provocateurs and the press and the successful organisational work by “riot specialists” made these catastrophic events possible”⁹⁴.

Since the mid-1950s, large-scale construction works began, altering completely Istanbul’s architecture. Until the end of the 1940s, notwithstanding the dissatisfying care for the historical center and the partial destruction due to H. Prost’s activity, the traditional urban fabric and a large part of the historical buildings, both public and private, had been preserved⁹⁵. Towards the end of the DP’s rule, the old Istanbul was practically completely destroyed.

The execution of Menderes’ urban planning aspirations began with an audit of Henri Prost’s urban development plan and continued nearly six years. To wit, a special commission of Turkish architects and urban planners was appointed with the task to save the “neglected city”. Since 1951 the High Council of Immovable Antiquities and Monuments also operated as a fully autonomous body, independent from local government and authorized with sole decision making on the issues relating with the preservation of Turkey’s historical heritage. The Council was also responsible for defining the decision making guidelines for the conservation, maintenance, and reconstruction of historical monuments, as well as for issuing scientific opinions on contentious issues⁹⁶. Towards the end of the planning period, the Prime Minister personally began the constructions in the city, and 1956 marked the beginning of large-scale destructions of historical buildings along with the construction of new ones, while the process developed under the motto “beautifying Istanbul and glorifying its Ottoman past”⁹⁷. Menderes appropriated the terminology used by Henri Prost and the then Vice-President of the Directorate of Reconstruction Ertuğrul Menteşe, speaking frequently of “beautifying” and of the need for the “creation of a modern system of roads for better traffic, the formation of new squares, the restoration of mosques and beautification of the city”⁹⁸.

The demolitions controlled personally by the Prime Minister were carried out spectacularly quickly given the lack of sufficient financial capital and at the

⁹⁴ Kuyucu, Ethno-religious “unmixing”, p. 377.

⁹⁵ A. Kubat, The study of urban form in Turkey, *Urban Morphology* (2010) 14 (1), p. 34.

⁹⁶ Aykaç, *The Commission for the Preservation*, p. 99.

⁹⁷ Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

⁹⁸ Cited from Akpınar, *The Making of Modern pay-i taht in Istanbul*, p. 68.

backdrop of political instability. Menderes undertook with enthusiasm the large-scale urban planning transformation that he perceived as an opportunity to increase public trust in the government and as substantial rebuttal of the criticisms towards his economic policy. In the beginning of the works, he announced, “Let it be known that we are undertaking all these projects at a time when it has been asserted that the power of action by state and by the government have gone bankrupt⁹⁹. All municipal and government resources were mobilized to fulfill the construction works, and between 1956 and 1960 even the military were employed¹⁰⁰. The projects were executed chaotically and without a clear plan under the influence of Menderes’ personal political aspirations and his own concept of a modern city¹⁰¹. Whereas in his public speeches the Prime Minister addressed the traditions of the past, the Islamism and Ottomanism as central values of Turkish society, he actually regarded the cosmopolitan imperial identity and traditional architecture as a hurdle for the sought-after change¹⁰². Thus, within four years, the historical parts of Istanbul were *de facto* completely annihilated.

Notwithstanding all that has been said here so far, in 1959 Istanbul received the Union of Municipalities of the European Council’s prize founded in 1955 in recognition of the architectural revival of the city. As the European Council president at the time announced, “We all know the courage and determination of Istanbul, the guard of the Straits, in the spectacular rebuilding effort it has undertaken without damaging any of its historical treasures that are the living witness to its bright past¹⁰³.”

Contrary to the praise above, data shows that by the end of the 1950s the city underwent radical and irreversible spatial change in the course of which over 7,000 historical buildings had been destroyed. European valuers clearly did not, or simply did not want to, take into consideration the grave destructions, social degradation, and notably un-European and undemocratic methods for renovation and Turkification used by the Turkish Prime Minister. Thus, the traditional neighborhoods and a significant number of historical buildings were demolished,

⁹⁹ Cited from Örmecioglu and Kamacı, *Istanbul 1956*, p. 808.

¹⁰⁰ Akpınar, *Urbanization Represented in the Historical Peninsula*.

¹⁰¹ Örmecioglu and Kamacı, *Istanbul 1956*, p. 807.

¹⁰² Akpınar, *Menderes imar hareketleri Türkleştirme politikalarının bir parçası mıydı?*

¹⁰³ Cited from I. Türeli, Heritagisation of the “Ottoman/Turkish House” in the 1970s: Istanbul-based Actors, Associations and their Networks. *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 19, 2014. <https://journals.openedition.org/ejts/5008>: 05.05.2020.

while the social composition of Istanbul's population was replaced in a period when the Western world cited Turkey as a successful example of modernization.

The DP's rule ended ingloriously on May 27, 1960 when a coup d'état took place. Menderes and his government were accused of nineteen different crimes, including illegal expropriation of property and destruction of Istanbul's historical heritage. The verdict was delivered on September 15, 1961, and soon after Adnan Menderes, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and the Minister of Finance Hasan Polatkan from the DP government, faced execution.

Conclusion

In the period between the proclamation of the Turkish republic in 1923 and the end of the Democratic Party's rule in 1960, Istanbul's multilayered cultural and historical heritage was repeatedly defined and redefined in accordance with the changing paradigm of Turkish national identity.

During the first decade of the republic, the new authorities' concept of the nation practically excluded Istanbul, its Europeanized population, its minorities, and its traditions within the scope of the "national". The early authorities aimed to impose a clean break with Ottoman traditions, while the architectural monuments from the Ottoman Empire and Byzantium were conceived as artifacts from the past, therefore abandoned and decaying. The same negative treatment was adopted towards the religious minorities in the imperial city.

In the 1930s, the paradigm for the origin of the nation entered a process of revision, and Ottoman history, along with a series of Seljuk and Ottoman monuments, was assimilated into national history. This process gave rise to measures for restoring urban infrastructure and to the adoption of the first modernization urban development plan in Istanbul led by the French urbanist H. Prost.

From the end of the 1930s, in the course of the preparations for celebrating the quincentenary of the conquest of Constantinople, the Byzantine antiquities in Istanbul were endowed with new meaning, treated as "conquered heritage" and integrated into the nationalist historical narrative. Thus, during World War II, Istanbul underwent myriad restoration projects that revived series of historical monuments, both Ottoman and Byzantine, and modernized the urban infrastructure.

During the last decade of the period examined here, the paradigm of the Turkish nation endured another significant alteration that changed the Kemalist principle of nationalism defended for 27 years. The first opposition party in power aligned the memory of the glorious Ottoman past, understood unambiguously

as “Islamic”, with the essence of the Turkish nation. The Islamic civilization code became an important marker of the Turkish national identity, and within this new ideology, Menderes focused on attracting migrants from provincial regions in order to Turkicize the “Byzantine” city. Simultaneously with the replacement of Istanbul’s ethnic composition, major urban planning changes took place, too. Until the end of the 1940s, notwithstanding the inevitable destructions of parts of the historical urban fabric, the French architect H. Prost managed to preserve the notable historical buildings and the city’s silhouette. In contrast, the large-scale constructions from the second half of the 1950s under Menderes’ personal leadership decimated Istanbul’s historical neighborhoods and destroyed significant architectural heritage.

It is also worth adding to the conclusions that, despite the changes in the conceptualization of the nation and the national, the attitude towards religious minorities clustered predominantly in Istanbul remained steadfast during the entire period of interest, and they persisted as the republic’s unloved citizens. Notwithstanding the political and ideological changes, the Turkish authorities treated them with suspicion and in practice frequently resorted not only to oppressive measures, but also to more serious bursts of violence, forcing the minorities to leave the city.

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Kalina Peeva

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
kalina_peekva@balkanstudies.bg*

BULGARIANS IN THE URBAN POLITICAL LIFE OF EUROPEAN TURKEY IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE YOUNG TURK COUP¹

Zorka Parvanova

Abstract: *The Young Turk Coup of July 1908 unleashed an unsuspected social energy and a previously unseen livening of urban social and political life in European Turkey. The negative trends in relations between the Bulgarian Revolutionary Organisation and the Young Turk Committees mobilised wider public circles and new political figures to seek adequate forms of political expression. The Union of Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs developed as the most popular national party, formed in accordance with the European model in the spirit of modern political liberalism. Leftist international ideas of consolidating all democratic forces in the Empire based on a unified radical platform made a second line, albeit fainter, in Bulgarian political activity. With their numerous programme documents and journalistic materials in a colorful ideological and political palette, Bulgarians left a specific trace in the new political life, which despite the efforts of the Young Turks to channel and unify it, in reality replicated the national fragmentation of the urban public space existing up to 1908.*

Keywords: *Young Turk Coup, European Turkey, Bulgarians, Urban Political Life*

The Young Turk Coup in July 1908 gave rise to a livening, previously unseen in Ottoman towns and unleashed an unsuspected social energy, not so much through the very act of restoring an outdated Constitution, but rather by creating conditions for a public and political life that practically had not existed until then. In a short period, hundreds of economic,

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professional, cultural, educational and political organisations emerged, while the processes developed intensively and quite turbulently. With the factual establishment of the “Unity and Progress” Committees as a second, but actually dominating power centre in the Empire, European Turkey and especially the Macedonian vilayets and most of all Thessaloniki, gained particular political weight and became an attractive force for community aspirations and personal ambitions for public expression and even for professional fulfilment and a political career.

The Bulgarian element particularly felt the change. Even though they were the most numerous national community in the three Macedonian vilayets and the Adrianople area, Bulgarians in the big urban centres were placed in a multi-ethnic and often hostile environment, particularly pressured after the Ilinden Preobrazhen Revolt of 1903 by the united front of the Ottoman authorities and the Greek church communities. Their positions in the *vilayet* and *kaza* councils (*meçlis*) and other regional government bodies remained insignificant, even after the implementation of the different European reform projects, also due to the reservations of the Internal Macedonian – Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation (IMARO) with respect to the limited nature of the reforms². Establishing their “state within the state” authority not only through the armed, but also through their judicial and financial structures, Bulgarian revolutionary committees influenced all aspects of the rural population’s life – imposing taxes, resolving domestic problems, property transactions and disputes etc. Despite the efforts to enhance and strengthen its urban committees, the Internal Organisation’s presence was less tangible in towns, where the Bulgarians were mainly encapsulated in their church school communities³.

² According to the position adopted by the Rilski Congress in 1905, the IMARO considered the Müritzsteg Reform Programme non-existent with respect to it, “and the population should refer its complaints not to the civilian agents and officers, but to the consuls“. A few months before, the Internal Organisation had declared a boycott of the *muhtar* (mayor) elections, due to the existing chaos and in order to impede the *meçlis*’ election. See *Вътрешната македоно-одринска револуционна организация (1893-1919)*. Документи на централните ръководни органи Т. 1, Част 1. София, УИ „Климент Охридски“, 2007, с. 436, 558.

³ Two opinions formed in the course of the discussion on urban organisations during the IMARO Kyustendil Congress in March 1908 – to popularise them or to subject them to strict selection, due to the ambivalent attitude of part of the urban population towards the revolutionary methods of the struggle. The second course of action prevailed in the Congress resolution and under the newly adopted rules, civil courts were to be established only in villages, while in towns, these functions would be transferred to “guilds (*esnaf*)

This situation changed visibly in the days after the Coup. Attracting the Internal Organisation to their camp was one of the priority tasks of the Young Turks, who planned to establish their power with the support of the different national communities. By legitimising IMARO as an important factor in the new political processes, the centre of Bulgarian activity shifted to the towns, mostly to Bitola and Thessaloniki, where also the most influential “Unity and Progress” Committees operated. To the extent that the Young Turk campaign began and developed most intensively in the Bitola vilayet, where by the way the Constitution was proclaimed one day prior to the Sultan’s decree restoring it, the Bulgarians in this vilayet centre were the first to be involved in the political events. The decision of the central and local leadership of the Internal Organisation to terminate the armed struggle and the agreement reached with the Bitola Young Turks Committee in the first few days after the coup, created preconditions for activity of Bulgarians in the town, which welcomed over 200 Bulgarian guerrillas on July 18, 1908⁴. The Bulgarian school building, where the regional, district and town committee of IMARO were set up, was transformed into a kind of political headquarters and an external expression of its position as a legitimate political representative of the Bulgarian population. Already legally functioning civil courts of the Internal Organisation, which were also been referred now by representatives of other nationalities, sealed the impression that it was perceived as an influential political player in the new conditions⁵.

The dominating role of the revolutionary committees predetermined the dissimilar manifestations of Bulgarian political activity in the separate vilayet centres. Bulgarians in Skopje and Adrianople remained more passive during the first so-called constitutional celebrations, which no matter how directed or spontaneous created a completely new atmosphere in urban life. The leadership in Skopje revolutionary district remained strongly reserved towards Young Turk constitutionalism and anticipated the development of the events, while the local

and other legitimate civic institutions”. *Вътрешната македоно-одринска револуционна организация (1893- 1919)*. Документи на централните ръководни органи, Т. 1, Част 2, София, 2007, с. 797- 798, 844-845.

⁴ Т. Петров, *Въоръжената борба на ВМОРО в Македония и Одринско (1904-1912)*. София, Военно издателство, 1991, с. 30-32. All of the members of the “Unity and Progress” Bitola Committee took part in the ceremony, but representatives of the Greek community in the town did not attend. Виж: ЦДА, ф. 331, оп. 1, а.е. 233, л. 12-15.

⁵ Сл. Славов, *ВМОРО от Илинден до Балканските войни 1903-1912*. София, Македонски научен институт, 2016, с. 168.

Bulgarians tried to understand the situation and to define their behaviour with the help of the diplomatic representation of the Principality of Bulgaria (the Bulgarian Trade Agency), which in turn referred them to the Internal Organisation. Even though the Bulgarian population welcomed the Young Turk order in the town with relief, the Bulgarian participation in the Constitutional celebrations was quite half-hearted⁶.

The pro-Young Turk positions of *Odrinski Glas* [Adrianople Voice] newspaper even predating the coup attracted the attention of the “Unity and Progress” committees towards the revolutionary circle around the newspaper’s editorial board in Plovdiv. After suppression of the 1903 rebellion however, the Internal Organisation in the vilayet practically fell apart, while the Bulgarian community in Adrianople was visibly neglected during the events following July 11/24. The Exarchate church community was not even invited to the official ceremony at the vilayet headquarters on the occasion of the announcement of the Sultan’s decree restoring the Constitution, while the Bulgarians in the town passively observed the marching Turks, Greeks, Jews and Armenians at the first parades⁷.

The reaction of the Bulgarians in Serres was interesting, as like their Greek fellow citizens, they did not hide their scepticism towards the changes and obviously failed to share the enthusiasm of the so-called “leftists” of the Internal Organisation, dominating in the Serres revolutionary district⁸. While its leaders Yane Sandanski and Todor Panitsa made their way towards Thessaloniki just a few days after the coup in order to show their support for the “fraternal Young Turk revolutionary organisation”, Bulgarians in Serres took part in the pro-Constitutional events in town, but demonstratively donning the Bulgarian flag⁹.

Undoubtedly, Bulgarians in Macedonia drew special attention from the Young Turk Committees, which clearly understood the value of a demonstration of support from a national organisation with IMARO’s potential and influence.

⁶ *Централен държавен архив (ЦДА)*, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 143, л. 223.

⁷ *Ibid.* а.е. 117, л. 153.

⁸ The ideological and organisational crisis in IMARO after the suppression of the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising in 1903 resulted in practical breaking off of the Serres and Strumitsa revolutionary district, the leaders of which were mostly surrounded by activists with left and leftist convictions and this is where the definition of this line/wing in the revolutionary movement as “leftists” comes from.

⁹ *Вътрешната македоно-одринска революционна организация (1893-1919)*, Т. 1, Част. 2, 901-902 (Manifest to all nationalities in the Empire); *ЦДА*, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 117, л. 116-116а.

The renowned Bulgarian publicist and journalist Simeon Radev was greatly impressed not only by the atmosphere of exaltation of the three-day illuminations and crowded rallies in Thessaloniki after the Constitution was proclaimed, but most of all by the attitude towards his compatriots: “Bulgarians are being greatly honoured. We don’t even believe our eyes, could it be a dream?”¹⁰. The Young Turk Officers who visited the Bulgarian Commercial Agency in Serres on July 12 stated before the Principality’s representative: “... we witnessed horrid attacks against the local Bulgarians from people sharing our origins and from people sharing their faith – Greeks... this will not be so in the future”¹¹. Despite his reservations about the motives and the political platform of the “Unity and Progress” Committees as a potential threat to the non-Turkish communities, the Bulgarian foreign minister Stefan Paprikov had to admit that in the first day after the coup “Bulgarians, their revolutionary leaders, Bulgarian ideals in general, are being particularly honoured” in the European vilayets¹².

In the course of a few weeks, all armed Bulgarian formations consisting of about 1000 guerrillas came down from the mountains and their festive welcoming added particular colourfulness to the town processions and parades. At the same time, in these events the Young Turks saw an important sign of the revolutionary nature of the changes, narrowing IMARO’s goals down only to a struggle against Abdul Hamid absolutism. Against this background, the legalisation of the Greek and Serbian armed formations, favoured under the old regime due to the Ottoman authorities’ neutrality was “swept under the rug”. While the Greek and Serbian consuls and the Patriarchal Metropolitans negotiated with the Young Turks to accept also the guerrillas backed by them, the formations consisting of Bulgarian Patriarchy supporters or Serbomans were the first to enter the vilayet centres, which rather outlined some specifics of the Bulgarian stroke in the political landscape¹³.

¹⁰ The quote is a handwritten text from the white fields of a proclamation leaflet of the Young Turk Committee. See *Вътрешната македоно-одринска революционна организация (1893-1919)*, Т. 1, Част 2, с. 900.

¹¹ ЦДА, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 117, л. 116-116а.

¹² Г. Марков, *Независимостта на България през Балканската криза 1908-1909*. София, Народно събрание, 2002, с. 43; Славов, *ВМОРО от Илинден до Балканските войни*, с. 160.

¹³ З. Първанова, *Между неосъществения Хюриет и неизбежната война. Националните движения в Европейска Турция и младотурският режим 1908-1912*. София, Хеликон, 2002, с. 73-76.

After the Constitution was proclaimed, the social and political life in the cities was orchestrated entirely by the Young Turk Committees, which made efforts to create an external image of a solid social and multi-ethnic foothold of the new regime. The crowded parades under the sounds of some local version of the Marseilles and the slogans proclaiming freedom and equality, accompanied by displays of fraternisation between representatives of the different nationalities, became a mandatory ritual for the urban population. In spite of being somewhat orchestrated, including by especially locally designated Young Turk emissaries, these demonstrations managed to create an elated atmosphere and a feeling of empathy towards the changes in wider social circles. Undoubtedly, the population of Thessaloniki, often referred to as the second capital of the Empire, were the most spontaneous and widespread participants. In addition to the specifics of the ethnically diverse commercial and cultural centre of European Turkey, the predominantly Jewish population, among which the Young Turk movement was already popular before the coup, also influenced attitudes in the town.

The first Bulgarian activity took place already on July 11 1908, when the schoolteacher Srebren Poppetrov held a speech devoted to freedom before a crowd gathered in one of the city squares on the occasion of the proclamation of the Constitution¹⁴. Another sign of the positive attitude towards the changes was given by the Gevgelia revolutionary leader Hristo Dolmanov, when he joined the Young Turk and Albanian activists leading the parade on the next day¹⁵. On July 12, the Thessaloniki Bulgarians, inspired by the general excitement, formed a wide procession in the town's streets. In his speech, the secretary of the Exarchate Church and School Community Todor Paskalev declared the support of the Bulgarian population for the new Constitutional parliamentary governance, but underlined its readiness to renew the struggle if it did not receive the promised rights. Three days later, the official welcoming of the Serres revolutionary leaders Yane Sandanski and Todor Panitsa by the members of the "Unity and Progress" Central Committee became one of the most discussed events. The wide publicity it and the subsequent meetings and official dinners with Young Turk officers received was obviously due to the reputation of Sandanski followers as sincere supporters of the new regime. It is true that their numerous speeches, interviews for Turkish newspapers and most of all in the well-known "Manifest to all Nationalities in the Empire" signed by Sandanski and announced on July 18, contained exhilarated as-

¹⁴ *Македонија*, N 12, 8 август 1908, с. 3.

¹⁵ Петров, *Въоръжената борба на ВМОРО*, с. 32.

assessments of the epochal nature of the changes in the spirit and style of the Young Turk proclamations and statements¹⁶. Even though the socialist views of the author of the Bulgarian manifesto Pavel Deliradev brought out anti-absolutism to a degree unshared by the Young Turks, the appeal to Bulgarians not to fall prey to “the propaganda that might be launched by the official authorities in Bulgaria against the joint struggle with the Turkish people” apparently won the sympathies and trust of “Unity and Progress” with respect to Sandanski followers¹⁷.

The members of the Central Committee of the Internal Organisation Petko Penchev and Pavel Hristov arrived in Thessaloniki from Bitola almost at the same time as the Serres revolutionaries, but their rather business-like approach in relations with the Young Turks explains the lack of noisy gatherings related to their presence. As far as, however, they represented the legitimate leadership and the greater part of the organisation, they attracted as much interest and their position was reflected in an interview in the British *Daily News* newspaper¹⁸. Actually, namely negotiations with the “Unity and Progress” Central Committee brought together the majority of the leaders and ideologists of the Bulgarian revolutionary organisation to the town. Their political weight is also evidenced by the fact that the Sublime Porte deflected the attempts of the Bulgarian Ambassador to Constantinople to raise some Exarchate-related pending issues because of the need to await the outcome of the Thessaloniki talks¹⁹.

The capital of European Turkey gradually concentrated the political potential of Bulgarians in the Empire, in which a wide palette of ideas, positions, personal controversies and conflicts accompanying the national movement until the coup, was projected. The revolutionary leaders (voevodas) from Strumitsa area led by Hristo Chernopeev joined the Serres functionaries, while the socialists D. Hadzhidimov, N. Harlakov, N. Stoynov and other ideologists of the revolutionary movement’s “leftists” arrived from Bulgaria upon being summoned by Sandanski. In turn, the official IMARO leadership received serious support from one of the most influential figures in the organisation and member of its Representation in Sofia, Hristo Matov. The focused policy of the Bulgarian government and the Exarchate to strengthen the Bulgarian intelligentsia in Macedonia facilitated and encouraged the return of a large number of emigrants, as well as activists of the Mace-

¹⁶ ЦДА, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 117, л. 155, 180; а.е. 140, л. 152-153.

¹⁷ ЦДА, ф. 3к, оп. 8, а.е. 1256, л. 54; *Вътрешната македоно-одринска революционна организация (1893-1919)*, Т. 1, Част 2, с. 900-902.

¹⁸ *Ден*, N 1562, 26 юли 1908.

¹⁹ ЦДА, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 117, 169-170.

donian – Adrianople movement born in the Principality, amongst which teachers, doctors, journalists, diplomats, which began playing an active role in public and political life.

During this period, the ambitions of Bulgarians to participate actively in the political processes had to do mainly with the Internal Revolutionary Organisation. As it was obviously courted by the Young Turks due to its authority and influence among the local population in Macedonia, its leaders had serious reasons to claim the role of sole political representative and voice of Bulgarian interests. Immediately after the Young Turk coup, this claim was shared also within the two wings of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement²⁰. The precedent set by the Young Turk Committees themselves actually legitimised the participation of a conspiratorial until the changes (and actually afterwards semi-legal) organisation like IMARO. Having become a customary sight in urban centres, including Thessaloniki, easily identifiable with their colourful fighting attire, Bulgarian revolutionaries enhanced the self-confidence of their compatriots with their presence and victorious behaviour, even of those who had negative views on the methods used by the revolutionary organisation.

Naturally, these views were linked to the general expectation that the organisational split in IMARO would be overcome as a condition for a unified and respectively stronger position of Bulgarians under the new regime. In connection to the efforts to restore the unity in the organisation and in the course of the negotiations with the Thessaloniki Young Turk Committee on the reforms in the Ottoman system of governance, also the Bulgarian political platform crystallised based on different programme documents²¹. Even though the accumulated disagreements and inter-personal intolerance doomed the attempts for unification, the leaders of the two wings actually formulated similar political requests for a radical revision of the 1876 Constitution in the spirit of modern political liberalism: a one-chamber parliament; general, direct and secret voting; freedom of speech, press and political association; a targeted state policy aimed at development of commerce, industry, agriculture and last but not least - education. Thus, in reality,

²⁰ Under the agreement between the IMARO Central Committee and the “Unity and Progress” Bitola Committee of July 14, Bulgarians were to communicate with the new authorities through the local revolutionary committees. See ЦДА, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 140, л. 101-102; Г. Трайчев, *Принос към революционното дело в Македония (Прилепско)*, София, 1925, с. 58-59.

²¹ *Вътрешната македоно-одринска революционна организация (1893-1919)*, Т. 1, Част 2, с. 902-905, 911-920.

Bulgarians came out with the widest and most radical democratisation agenda of the Ottoman political system based on people's sovereignty.

Even though it did not share the extreme internationalism of the "leftist" wing, in its address to the Thessaloniki "Unity and Progress" Committee on July 23, the IMARO Central Committee noted that it finds "desirable a common congress of all revolutionary organisations..., as well as the establishment of a permanent federative committee to run the movement until the time when the revolutionary struggle will cede its positions to the political one"²². This position reflects the general conviction in Bulgarian revolutionary circles that the July events in the Empire were merely the beginning of the forthcoming democratisation processes, to be guaranteed namely by the revolutionary organisations. Unlike the leaders of "Unity and Progress", who strived to channel public activity by melting national formations into their own structures, Bulgarian revolutionary activists saw themselves in the role of an independent political factor. Beyond the principle position for preservation of the IMARO organisational and armed potential, defended both by the Central Committee and the group of Y. Sandanski, in some places and in particular in smaller towns, revolutionary leaders who had become legitimised practically appropriated power functions with respect to the Bulgarian population. One of the clear examples of such occurrences is Enidzhe Vardar, where voevoda Apostol Petkov entered the town with several hundred guerrilla fighters and villagers from the surrounding villages and practically took over power in the town. Interference on the side of the Internal Organisation's Thessaloniki Committee and the personal intermediation of the pharmacist Ivan Tenchov prevented the conflict mounting with the Young Turks over this act, while the Enidzhe Vardar voevoda joined Sandanski in Thessaloniki²³. Just a week later, however, Apostol returned to Enidzhe Vardar and according to his contemporaries, over the next few months "he settled in a house in the centre of the Bulgarian neighbourhood with his people and behaved like a real "bey"²⁴.

In the beginning of August 1908, the Central Young Turk Committee in Thessaloniki came out with a "general programme", obviously aligned with the political demands of the Bulgarian revolutionary organisation – a revision of the Constitution based on people's sovereignty, dissolution of the Senate, freedom of political association, extension of electoral rights and the powers of the local ad-

²² *Ibid.*, p. 903.

²³ ЦДАА, ф. 331к, оп. 1, а.е. 233, л. 29-31.

²⁴ Cited from Славов, *ВМОРО от Илинден до Балканските войни 1903-1912*, с. 169.

ministration, reduction of military expenses. Interestingly, the text largely reproduced the social accents in the programme documents of the “leftists” regarding introduction of labour legislation, tax reform and other legislative amendments aimed at giving land to landless and semi-landless agricultural owners from *vakif* land or land belonging to the “civil list”²⁵.

However, at the same time the Young Turk Programme, explicitly underlining the maintaining of the “geographical borders of the vilayets” (point 7), is a clear indication of the categorical rejection of the main Bulgarian demand – regional self-governance under the new administrative division, according to the ethnic boundaries in European Turkey. Even though this formulation was present in the programme documents of both wings of the Bulgarian revolutionary organisation, the dominating internationalism and anti-monarchism, especially as justification for the negative attitude towards Bulgarian state policy, made the “leftists” a preferred partner for the Young Turks. While the group around Y. Sandanski assessed its negotiations with “Unity and Progress” as successful, the talks of P. Penchev, P. Hristov and Hr. Matov with the Young Turk Committee were difficult and after the third meeting, they practically ended²⁶. Moreover, the IMARO Central Committee, for which regional self-governance was the only real guarantee for democratisation of the Ottoman political system, expressed its strong disapproval of the Young Turk Programme and forecasted the inevitable rift between the two organisations²⁷. The complicated relations with “Unity and Progress” not only reflected the ideological differences within the Bulgarian revolutionary movement,

²⁵ The programme was provided on August 5, 1908 to Pancho Dorev, Assistant Prosecutor at the Thessaloniki Court of Appeal, who translated during the discussions between the representatives of the Central Committees of the two organisations. The Bulgarian translation of the text of the document made by Dorev can be found at: ЦДА, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 112, л. 42, 46-47.

²⁶ In their second address to the “Unity and Progress” Committee of July 28 1908, the IMARO Central Committee gave up its demand for “dethroning of the current Sultan”, taking into consideration the religious and canonical nature of the issue of the “crown of the Ottoman Empire”, but insisted on “immediate steps towards the election of municipal and administrative councils”, obviously in order to guarantee adequate representation of the Bulgarian majority in the Macedonian vilayets in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. See *Вътрешната македоно-одринска революционна организация (1893-1919)*, Т. 1, Част 2, с. 904-905.

²⁷ Interestingly, this forecast was made by P. Penchev, who immediately after the coup categorically defended the position for legalisation of the revolutionary organisation. ЦДА, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 112, л. 42.

already existing before July 1908, but also additionally deepened the rift, which predetermined the fragmentation of Bulgarian political space in the next months.

The first signs of a change in the attitude of the Young Turks towards the Internal Organisation at the end of July and early August no doubt had to do with the advanced stage of disassembling of its armed structures. It is a very indicative fact that despite the efforts of the revolutionary activists who returned from Bulgaria to Adrianople lead by Mihail Gerdzhikov to demonstrate a strong political presence through the congress held in the city in August, they received quite a cool welcome from the local Young Turk Committee²⁸. Even though prior to the coup the representatives of the Adrianople revolutionary region shared the pro-Young Turk attitudes in the “leftists”, clearly the weakness of the Internal Organisation in its failed attempt to restore its guerrilla institute in the area after the 1903 revolt, fertilised the new authorities’ open negligence towards its representatives.

In this situation, preserving its structures and combat capacity became a priority for IMARO leadership, which explains not only the withdrawal of its leaders from the talks with the Young Turk Committee, but also their gradual shift towards other vilayet centres (Bitola and Skopje) where the organisation’s main potential was concentrated. Hristo Matov himself arrived in Thessaloniki on July 25 not so much with the hope of reaching a serious agreement with “Unity and Progress”, but rather to stop, in his own words, the breakdown of the organisation²⁹. In turn, the representatives of the “leftists”, not without the support of the Young Turks, strengthened their political presence in Thessaloniki mostly through active publishing.

Early August 1908 marked the launch of the official newspaper of Sandanski supporters *Konstitutsionna zarya* [Constitutional Fireworks], which was actually the first Bulgarian newspaper in the town. A unique political circle, defined by contemporaries as “the socialist headquarters of Sandanski”, consisting of left and leftist functionaries arriving from the Principality formed around its edito-

²⁸ М. Герджиков, *Спомени. Документи. Материали*. София, Наука и изкуство, 1984, с. 95.

²⁹ Хр. Матов, *За своята революционна дейност (Лични бележки)*. София, Глушков, 1928, с. 15, 54. Already at the end of July, Pavel Hristov set off for Bitola and after writing the mentioned second letter to the Young Turk Committee together with Hr. Matov and S. Radev, Petko Penchev travelled for “propaganda work” to Veles and Shtip. It is indicative of the lack of high expectations regarding the negotiations that the revolutionary leaders planned to define their further conduct depending on the response of the Young Turks, which they did not actually receive. ЦДА, ф. 3к, оп. 8, а.е. 1256, л. 59.

rial office, strategically situated in the centre of Thessaloniki, across from Ottoman Bank³⁰. With the launching a bit later of *Edinstvo* [Unity] newspaper around Hristo Chernopeev it appeared that the “leftists” were gaining a serious advantage on the political propaganda field, moreover in the heart of European Turkey³¹. In reality however, the emergence of a second official newspaper was rather an expression of the rift that had occurred in the left. The extreme Young Turk positions of *Edinstvo* that were basically brought to conformism (mainly under the editorship of P. Deliradev) explained why these “leftists” activists rejected its programme documents and shifted towards the idea of a unified Ottoman formation uniting the representatives of the different nationalities based on a single radical political platform.

The deepening fragmentation in the Bulgarian revolutionary organisation visibly exhausted the perspectives for its transformation and establishment as a legitimate and universally recognised political factor in the conditions set by the Constitutional parliamentary regime. In parallel with these processes however, wider public groups who had remained outside or in the periphery of the revolutionary movement or had been incidentally involved in it up to 1908, became active in the urban centres. Self-organising of Bulgarians began immediately after July 11 through the commissions set up in connection to their participation in the Constitutional celebrations, consisting of “the more prominent citizens and the revolutionary activists”, which gradually transformed into discussion clubs on the possibilities for political activity in the new situation³². Town events convened at the initiative of these first public organisations brought representatives of different social groups of the Bulgarian population into the political debate. The need to form a new political culture also resulted in the emergence of the first clubs of an educational and political nature (Constantinople, Bitola, Veles etc.). Just ten days after the establishment of the Constitutional celebrations commission in Bitola, on July 12-13 Bulgarians in the town laid down the foundations of the *Nov zivot*

³⁰ П. К. Яворов, *Събрани съчинения*, Т. 5. Писма. София, Български писател, 1979, с. 99.

³¹ *Napred* newspaper, published at the same time in Thessaloniki under the editorship of the schoolteacher Svetoslav Dobrev, close to the other wing, came out in only 4 issues.

³² Т. Карайовов, *Как се създадоха Българските конституционни клубове в Турция, Летоструй*. Календар на българите, Цариград, 1909, с. 201.

[New life] association, which organised public gatherings, lectures and talks on different political topics by representatives of the teacher intelligentsia³³.

Despite the notable public activity of Bitola citizens, the initiative and the first steps towards the creation of a purely political formation came from the Bulgarians in Thessaloniki. As the enthusiasm shared by them at the multi-national parades and official ceremonies around the proclamation of the Constitution died down, they focused their efforts on public and political self-organisation within their community, by the way similarly to the other nationalities in the town³⁴. The buildings of the Exarchate education institutions, which had gradually formed as a unique Bulgarian spiritual realm in the urban environment in the course of the previous decades, also became a stage for political expression. The meeting on July 24 brought together the elite of the Bulgarian Thessaloniki community, as well as representatives of the two wings in the revolutionary organisation, which presented their diverging views on the starting positions of the future political activity. The views of P. Deliradev in the spirit of internationalism, already known from his numerous public appearances, were sharply criticised by Sv. Dobrev, involved in the other wing, who pointed out the need for unification of Bulgarians based on their national programme³⁵.

Three days later in the hall of the most representative Exarchate school building, the Girls' High School, the first Bulgarian Constitutional club was established based on a decision adopted by the "assembly of Bulgarian citizens from Thessaloniki", held there. The proposal was defended by representatives of the local intelligentsia – the schoolteachers Yordan Mirchev and Srebren Poppetrov and the lawyer Pancho Dorev and the Council consisted of them and three merchants (D. Kondov, D. Penushliev and P. Sarafov), an entrepreneur (Mitrevski), a doctor (Tenchev, MD), the judge Em. Lyapchev (member of the Extraordinary Court) and the attorney Hr. Dalchev. The impression that new public figures are coming

³³ *Дневник*, N 2173, 14 август 1908, с. 2; Г. Първанов, *Създаване на Съюза на българските конституционни клубове* (юли-септември 1908 г.), *Векове*, N 6, София, 1982, с. 8.

³⁴ The Greek demands in response to the invitation of the Young Turk Committees to all nationalities to present their reform proposals were formulated in a Memorandum of the Thessaloniki Greek community. At the same time, a Greek general assembly in the building of the Constantinople syllogos adopted a decision to transform the association into a political centre tasked to develop an organisational network in the European vilayets in view of Greek participation in the parliamentary elections.

³⁵ ЦДА, ф. 331к, оп.1, а.е. 249, л. 2-3; *Дневник*, N 2173, 14 август 1908, с. 2.

forward was also confirmed in the speech of the student Hr. Yankov, a member of the local revolutionary committee, who “threatened Bulgarian citizens not to allow themselves to do anything that runs contrary to the Organisation”³⁶. The attending activists from Y. Sandanski’s inner circle, among which T. Panitsa, left the meeting before the election of governance bodies as a form of protest against the establishment of the new political formation. The quota of four positions in the Council for representatives in the revolutionary committee obviously reflected the aim to avoid further deepening of the tension and division, but also their conviction regarding the need for ideological and personnel continuity between the revolutionary and the legal organisation.

Unlike the “leftist” leaders from the other wing, despite their obvious absence from the Thessaloniki forum, supported its initiative and were actively involved in the establishment of the second Bulgarian constitutional club in Skopje. At the initiative of the Bulgarian intelligentsia in the town, on July 31 in the building of the Pedagogical Men’s High School a meeting was convened, with an impressively high attendance of revolutionary activists – P. Penchev in his capacity as member of the IMARO Central Committee, the leader of the local organisation Todor Alexandrov, well-known voevoda commanders such as P. Atsev and P. Chaulev, as well as representatives of the “leftists” lead by Hr. Chernopeev. The presence of the Exarchate Metropolitan Sinesiy and the Bulgarian trade agent Iv. Ikononov reaffirmed the impression of the widely representative character of the event³⁷. The lively discussions provoked by Chernopeev’s extremely pro-Young Turk statements prompted the teacher Alexiev to declare, “people are not interested in the mutual bickering between the warring camps..., which sow quarrels and rifts among Bulgarians”³⁸. This statement expressed the dominating attitudes and expectations of the new political organisation to consolidate the Bulgarian community.

Very indicative of these moods was the colourful event for the establishment of the Bulgarian Constitutional club in Serres in mid-August. The calm and business-like tone of the discussions of the citizens gathered in the building of the boarding house of the Pedagogical High School was abruptly violated by the sudden intrusion of the voevoda leaders close to Sandanski, Taskata Serski and Stoyu Hadzhiyski. Their accusations that the newly-established political club was inspired by the Exarchate community and the Bulgarian Trade Agency, that

³⁶ *ИДАА*, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 142, л. 2.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3-5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

it was a puppet for persons who “until recently were spying for Hilmi Pasha” in Thessaloniki and that “it would be against the (revolutionary) organisation” were followed by open threats against its founders. Sincere irritation and non-comprehension can be seen in the spontaneous reaction of one of the persons present: “... you, voevodas, stunned us so much that we do not know what to do”³⁹. The decision that was adopted to elaborate the Statute based on an analysis of the Sandanski programme and to reach a compromise on common activities reaffirmed the objective to overcome the destructive internal disagreements in the Bulgarian community. Despite the ongoing standoff between the representatives of the two wings in the revolutionary organisation, which occasionally “heated” the discussions, the Bulgarian trade agents observed, somewhat surprised, the unusual unanimity and mobilisation of the Bulgarian urban population in the development of the club organisation.

Undoubtedly, the Bulgarian Constitutional Club in Thessaloniki became the model, to the extent that its structure and programme documents were reproduced almost literally by organisations being set up in the other towns. Its Statute was adopted with a large majority at the general assembly held on August 4, while the rising number of participants in this forum at yet another Thessaloniki forum shows that the “idea was received well by the Bulgarian population” in town, which in turn explains why this time the attending Sandanski supporters refrained from participation in the discussions⁴⁰. The Bitola Constitutional Club, founded in early August by “representatives of different estates” was particularly active and had set a goal to develop a common Bulgarian political programme to be submitted for discussion by a future general congress in Bitola or Thessaloniki. One of the club’s main priorities was to “lead Bulgarian citizens in the forthcoming electoral battle by ensuring the necessary funds”, which speaks of political maturity and pragmatism⁴¹.

For a brief time the clubs in the vilayet centres created a wide organisational network of regional structures, while the political excitement in Macedonia transferred to the Adrianople area. In the first ten days of August, Bulgarian political clubs were set up in Dedeagach, Lozengrad, Mustafa Pasha (today’s Svilengrad). In addition to the task of explaining and defending the political rights of citizens, they set the goal of establishing schools, community centres and other

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13-14.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9a.

education centres to “raise the national sentiments of the Bulgarian population”⁴². In Adrianople however, the sharp disagreements between the representatives of the Exarchate and of the Internal Organisation hampered the efforts for political mobilisation of the Bulgarian community. On the day after it was founded at the initiative of the teacher Dimitar Nashev, the “Bulgarian Civil Club *Probu-da*” faced the problems stemming from this conflict. Upon the insistence of the revolutionary activists close to M. Gerdzhikov, a vote was held on a proposal for deletion of a provision in the adopted Statute that the Club will serve Bulgarian national interests by supporting the Exarchate and its work. In an atmosphere of distrust, mutual insults and accusations, the Adrianople club organisation quickly fell apart, while the local Bulgarians attempted to create at least one financial entity to “free Bulgarian guilds [*esnafs*] from the exploitation by the local Greeks and Jewish moneychangers”⁴³.

After the Young Turk Coup, the club organisation became the most popular form of public expression of the different nationalities in European Turkey, but only Bulgarians developed it into a modern structured party with a single political platform. The founding congress of the Union of Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs (UBCC) held in the period September 7 – 13, 1908 in Thessaloniki, gathered over 80 delegates, representing the Bulgarian public elite of the towns in Macedonia and the Adrianople area – 35 teachers, 22 merchants, 4 doctors, three lawyers, priests, journalists and students from each, two civil servants and land owners, a bookseller, tailor and flour producer from each⁴⁴. Most of them were alumni from the Exarchate high schools in Thessaloniki, Bitola, Adrianople, Skopje, a significant part had University degrees from Bulgaria and countries in Western Europe and a substantial part of them had serious revolutionary “experience” in the Internal Organisation.

Unlike the founding meetings of the local organisations held in the Exarchate school buildings, the Thessaloniki town theatre *Eden* was engaged for the Congress meetings, which reflected the increasing self-confidence of the Bulgarian club activists concerning the importance and political weight of their party.

⁴² ЦДА, ф. 176к, оп. 2, а.е. 142, л. 2, р. 12.

⁴³ *Ibid.* Circles close to the Exarchate blamed this unfortunate situation for the Bulgarians on “dark individuals flooding the city from the outside, pretending to be correspondents and agents of socialist newspapers in Bulgaria“. See ЦДА, ф. 176, оп. 2, а.е. 145, л. 35-37.

⁴⁴ Карайовов, *Как се създадох Българските конституционни клубове*, с. 202-205; Първанов, *Създаване на Съюза на българските конституционни клубове*, с. 12.

With the active support of returning emigrants who had accumulated serious administrative, diplomatic and journalistic experience in Bulgaria, the UBCC made its entrance into the Empire's public and political life with an authoritative forum and programme documents in line with the spirit of modern liberalism⁴⁵.

The Union of Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs had members from different social grounds, including representatives of different streams and structures in the Bulgarian national movement up to 1908, while its organisational territory covered almost all towns in Macedonia and the Adrianople area⁴⁶. The vigorous party development efforts around the formation of the UCCB reflected the dominant attitudes among the Bulgarian population for active participation in the new political processes in the Empire through a national organisation. This undoubtedly leading line in Bulgarian political activity did not exclude the efforts and attempts for interaction with other communities, mainly through the common Ottoman political clubs set up by the Young Turk Committees, which in reality remained Bulgarian – Turk clubs in many places. Thus, for example in the autumn of 1908, at the initiative of Bulgarian teachers and Young Turk officers a “People’s Club” was established in Kukush, lacking, however, clear political functions and an organisational structure⁴⁷. The Bulgarians in Adrianople demonstrated a significant presence at the general town meeting convened on August 9 by the local “Unity and Progress” Committee for the establishment of an international club⁴⁸.

Bulgarian participation in such a type of political organisations that obviously appealed more to the “leftists” in the revolutionary organisation, were actually encouraged also by the leaders of the other wing. In the circular letter to the

⁴⁵ *Дневници на Учредителния и на Втория конгреси на Българските конституционни клубове в Отоманската държава*, Solun, 1910; *Вътрешната македоно-одринска революционна организация (1893-1919)*, Т. 1, Част 2, с. 926-938.

⁴⁶ Former and current activists of the IMARO, the Revolutionary Brotherhood in Thessaloniki, the emigrant movement in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Exarchate attended the Founding Congress. The regions Drama, Melnik, Razlog and Gorna Dzhumaya, where clubs had not been set up due to resistance from Sandanski supporters, did not have any delegates. See *Дневници на Учредителния и на Втория конгреси*, с. 1-2; Първанов, *Създаване на Съюза на българските конституционни клубове*, с. 12.

⁴⁷ *Конституционна заря*, N 9, 14 септември 1909; Г. Първанов, *Народно-федеративната партия в национално-освободителното движение*, *Векове*, Българско историческо дружество, N 3, София, 1989, с. 35.

⁴⁸ Around 20 Bulgarians participated in the meeting, but only 3 – 4 representatives of the Greeks in town, who in reality boycotted the initiative. *ЦДА*, ф. 176, оп. 2, а.е. 112, л. 120.

local committees dated August 12 1908, the IMARO Central Committee recommended that “alongside the Bulgarian clubs... also mixed should be set up (with Turks, Greeks etc.)”, but explicitly underlined that “their task would be different – they would serve only the interests that are common for all nationalities”⁴⁹. To the extent however, that they were placed under the pressure of the Young Turk Committees and were dominated by their representatives, these organisational structures practically, and within the meaning of their programme documents, acquired a bureaucratic nature, the expectations of Bulgarians that they would have actual political initiative gradually evaporated. In this situation, in the autumn of 1908, the idea of the Bulgarian revolutionary committees initiating the formation of a common Ottoman democratic party gained growing support among the “leftists”. The first step was taken on November 1 in Thessaloniki with the establishment of “People’s Organisation”, which in the coming months would play an important role in the processes that lead to unification of the groups around Y. Sandanski and Hr. Chernopeev and the creation of the People’s Federative Party (Bulgarian section) in 1909⁵⁰.

This developing second political line associated with the international ideas of unification of all democratic anti-absolutist forces in the Empire failed to go beyond the borders of the circles gravitating towards the “leftists” in the Bulgarian revolutionary organisation. It retained weak popularity among the Bulgarian urban population, which explains the slower pace and the limited territorial scope of development of the party around the founding of the People’s Federative Party. Despite the support of the Young Turk Committees, demonstrated also during the parliamentary elections, the representatives of this line did not find and also did not demonstrate particular activity to gain supporters amongst the other nationalities, while at the same time they remained isolated within the Bulgarian community. Some of the ideologists of this political circle later focused their efforts on the formation of the first socialist organisations in European Turkey.

In the first two – three months after the Young Turk Coup, the Bulgarians in the three Macedonian vilayets and partly in the Adrianople area were actively involved in the public and political life of European Turkey. Upon its legitimisation as an influential political factor in the new environment, the Internal Macedonian Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation moved its activity to the large vilayet cen-

⁴⁹ *Вътрешната македоно-одринска революционна организация (1893-1919)*, Т. 1, Част 2, с. 911.

⁵⁰ Първанов, *Народно-федеративната партия в национално-освободителното движение*, с. 35-37.

tres, which gave Bulgarian urban communities self-confidence and hopes of real participation in the reform processes. The increasingly negative trends in relations between IMARO and the Young Turk Committees and within its own ranks mobilised wider public circles and brought forward new political figures in the quest for adequate organisational forms in view of the changed circumstances. The fruit of this public activity, which reached its apogee namely during the examined period, was the creation of the most widespread and modern structured national party in European Turkey, namely the Union of Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs.

Despite the efforts of the Young Turk Committees to unify and channel the political party energy they provoked in the bedrock of their own Ottoman platform, the national fragmentation of the urban political space existing up to 1908, was reproduced in the new political life, where Bulgarians left their specific and identifiable trace. Their numerous programme documents and polemic and analytical published materials created an extremely vivid ideological and political pallet. However, the useful party organising experience brought in from Bulgaria also deepened the extreme ideological and personal confrontation, which engulfed enormous public energy, moreover in a political reality that was unfavourable for Bulgarians in the Empire.

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Zorka Parvanova

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
zorka.parvanova@balkanstudies.bg*

“THE BULGARIAN SALONICA”¹

Yura Konstantinova

Abstract: *The Balkan Wars put an end to the Bulgarian presence in Salonica, but not to the Bulgarian imagination relative to the city. Almost until the second decade of the 20th century, Ottoman Salonica used to be a bigger, richer and more modern city than the Bulgarian capital. It evoked emotions and interest among Bulgarians, who saw in it many economic, political and cultural opportunities. For Bulgarians, however, Salonica was primarily linked with their liberation struggles, so its image is dominated by themes of death and self-sacrifice, of fear and courage, of prisons and concentration camps. To them it is simultaneously a city of prisons and a city of flight, a city of youth and nostalgia, of education and pogrom, of economic opportunity and wasted effort.*

Keywords: *Bulgarians, Salonica, Collective Memory, Macedonian Question*

The creators of the Slavic script, the brothers Cyril and Methodius, embody the spiritual link between Salonica and Bulgarians, but they are far from being its only symbol in their collective memory². The city is a “capital of the past” for many Bulgarians and Bulgarian families relat-

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² According to Pierre Nora’s popular definition, “collective memory is the memory, or the set of memories, conscious or not, of a lived and/or mythicized experience by a living collectivity, of the identity in which the feeling of the past is an integral part”. For a detailed discussion of collective and historical memory see П. Нора, *Колективната памет*. В: *Духът на „Анали“ (антология)*. София, Критика и хуманизъм, 1997; Ж. Кандо, *Антропология на паметта*. София, Одри, 2001; П. Рикьор, *Паметта, историята, забравата*. София, Сонм, 2006.

ed to it in one way or another. Their stories are the stories of teachers and students at the Bulgarian schools in Salonica, of craftsmen and merchants, of expatriate workers and revolutionaries, of politicians and journalists, of philanthropists and patriots, of adventurers and travelers. It is indeed the stories of Bulgarians born in Salonica, of Bulgarians who lived in Salonica, of such whose paths had led them there, brought together that portray the picture of the “Bulgarian Salonica“, which differs from the image of the “Jewish”, “Ottoman”, “Greek” or “Levantine” city.

These stories intertwine with events from the older and more recent history of the region, as well as with their artistic interpretations and in their totality build the Bulgarian ideas about Salonica. This text is not an endeavour to present the Bulgarian historical presence in the city or its economic and political significance for the Bulgarians, which are the subject matter of recent scholarly research³. It presents the Bulgarian view of the city and the changes that occurred in it as a result of the modernization processes and political cataclysms of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Drawing mainly on memoir literature and fiction, on theatre and cinema productions, the article analyzes the Bulgarian mental pictures of Salonica and its place in the collective memory of the nation.

Every Bulgarian visiting Salonica is most impressed by the sea. For Tsarevna Miladinova, who was born in the western Macedonian city of Struga, “the sea, the fascinating Salonica sea” remains forever most attractive in the city. “I was attracted”, she wrote, “by the outlandish silhouettes of the sailing ships, with their high masts, with the white, yellow and yellow-red sails, with the incessant noise and unceasing movement of lightly clad bearded men, with faces burned by the southern sun”⁴. Andrey Toshev, born in Stara Zagora and teacher in the city at the end of the 19th century, was in no way less rapturous: “We enjoyed the relatively cool hours at dusk by the sea, or undertook long rides by boats, whose rapid gliding along the smooth sea surface left indescribable green-emerald furrows behind them. ... And far from us at the port, dozens of steamers, with the flags of the respective states

³ See Ю. Константинова, Н. Данова, Й. Желев (съст.) Солун и българите: *история, памет, съвремие*. София, ИБЦТ-БАН, 2019 and the literature quoted there. In the cited collective monograph the topics of the position of Salonica in the collective memory of the Bulgarians and of their journeys to the city in modern times are examined by Malamir Spasov and Evgenia Troeva respectively.

⁴ Ц. Миладинова-Алексиева, *Епоха, земя и хора. Из българското минало*. София, Печатница Художник, 1939, с. 113.

quietly fluttering on their masts, kept on unloading all sorts of manufactured and colonial goods and loading, so as to carry to all corners of Europe, the produce of the fertile Macedonian fields and valleys⁵. This is how the Bulgarian diplomat linked the romantic view of the sea and the economic significance of the Salonica port. The latter prompted Aleko Konstantinov to write his brilliant lines: “If only I could get you – the Customs of Salonica, I do not need much: just two years, leave me for just two years as customs manager or appraiser, come and have a talk with me then ...The Salonica Customs! California, God damn it!”⁶ This popular phrase reflects most accurately the economic significance of Salonica to the Bulgarians and the yearning for the opportunities offered by its port. The economic attractiveness of the city was most important for the Bulgarians, who resided in it at the turn of the 19th century and took pride in its commercial significance⁷.

Salonica’s railway connectivity to the region and the influx of merchants from the small urban centres to it were among the reasons why the enlightener Kuzman Shapkarev predicted a “bright future” for it. He noted that one could not perform any work there without the Jews, who were twice the number of “all other tribes put together”⁸. The Jews, who definitely dominated the city’s population until the second decade of the 20th century, made a huge impression on the Bulgarians. The journalist Petar Zavojev was fascinated by “the peculiar Venetian costumes of the female Jews that are both chic and exciting”. He likened them to sea sirens that had come ashore, yet he did not fail to note that the male Jews in Salonica were not only traders but slaves as well. “They are in the *bazaar*, they are in the street, they are on the boats at sea and in the barns and in the steamships. They are everywhere: ants that never rest, human beings that suffer and contribute”. Nonetheless P. Zavojev was not willing to qualify Salonica as a Jewish city, but maintained that it “is as much Jewish as it is Turkish”⁹.

And, in actual fact, he was probably right, for even though they were impressed by the multitude of Jews, because of whom everything was closed on Saturdays, the Bulgarians always highlighted the specific image of the city that today

⁵ А. Тошев, Солун (Из моите македонски спомени), *Македонија*, бр. 1195 от 10 окт. 1930 г.

⁶ А. Константинов, Разни хора, разни идеали (feuilleton III, first published in the *Zname (Flag)* newspaper on 5 February 1897).

⁷ *Книжници за прочит*, 1890; N 4–7, с. 236–249.

⁸ *НА-БАН*, ф. 15к, а.е. 47, л. 63–65.

⁹ П. Завоев, *1908 Писма от Македонија (пътни бележки, наблюдения и впечатления)*. София, Либерален клуб, 1916, с. 72, с. 83.

we would probably refer to as Levantine. Tsarevna Miladinova pointed out the “poky, curved, unclean and noisy streets” and described the city as being “closer to the Middle Ages that have long gone by than to the present-day new times”¹⁰. K. Shapkarev had the same impression during his first visit to the city in 1865.

He saw it as “ugly and unclean”, “loathsome and disgusting“, with dirty, insipid and stinking well water that was not drinkable¹¹. Prof. Anastas Ishirkov, who visited Salonica three times in the 1909–1911 period, also assessed it as definitely “Oriental”: with narrow and bending streets and dilapidated buildings, with “a huge mixture of peoples, languages, costumes, customs and building”. He noticed the modernization of the city: the gas and electric lighting, the modern plumbing, the pretty carriages, the shady gardens, the well designed beer houses, cafes and restaurants. In his opinion “the quest for renewal” was evident everywhere, but it was rather slow, due to which the modern coexisted with the archaic¹². And obviously his observation was accurate, for researchers have rallied around the idea that it took longer for the Balkans to modernize, and some voices even refer to an “infinite Ottoman modernization”¹³.

During his second visit to the city in 1888, K. Shapkarev was once again aware of its modernization¹⁴. The major change perceived by him at that time had to do with the demolition of the fortress walls, which enabled the appearance of countless cafes along the seafront street and triggered the construction of “new magnificent buildings”, while streets were widened and waste water was collected in underground sewers¹⁵. According to K. Shapkarev, however, the city was still

¹⁰ Миладинова-Алексиева, *Епоха, земя и хора*, с. 113.

¹¹ *НА-БАН*, ф. 15к, а.е. 47, л. 59–60.

¹² А. Иширков, *Град Солун, политикогеографски и народностопански бележки*. София, Хр. Олчев, 1911, с. 41.

¹³ D. Parusheva, Running “Modern” Cities in a Patriarchal Milieu: Perspectives from the Nineteenth-Century Balkans. In: R. Roth, R. Beachy (ed.), *Who Ran the Cities? City Elites and Urban Power Structures in Europe and North America, 1750–1940*. Routledge, 2007, p. 179–192; N. Καλογήρου, Το παλιμψηστο της αρχιτεκτονικής της Θεσσαλονίκης: εκμοντερνισμοί και βαλκανικές προσαρμογές. In: Ε. Γαβρά, Κ. Γκιουφή, Γ. Τσότσος (επιμ.), *Πολιτισμός και χώρος στα Βαλκάνια 17ος – 20ος αιώνας*. Θεσσαλονίκη, Εκδόσεις Πανεπιστημίου Μακεδονίας, 2015, σ. 296.

¹⁴ K. Shapkarev’s observations on the modernization of Salonica have been preserved in his manuscript *Пътуване по коритото на р. Струма до Сяр – Солун и по железницата Скопие, Куманово, Паланка, България, of 1888*, which is kept at *НА-БАН*, ф. 15к, а.е. 47, л. 1–74, mostly л. 58–62.

¹⁵ The demolition of the fortified city walls began in 1870. The first wall to be pulled down was that on the side of the sea, which was replaced by the newly built seafront street,

overcrowded and had no sidewalks or squares. The same conclusion was made in 1910 by Javit Bey, the Minister of Economy in the Young Turk government and Member of Parliament from Salonica¹⁶. Some of the Bulgarians who visited the city in 1908 shared the feeling of “deep sadness” they experienced as they roamed “the narrow and dirt filled streets”. Even the seafront street, which they described as “the best indeed – but still narrow, without a beautiful decking and not devoid of all sorts of waste and miasmas”, was “a pathetic sight” with “the tasteless pier” and the “dark and narrow streets” that started from it and “that have almost no lighting at night and serve as water closet for the numerous passers-by”¹⁷.

Dimo Hadzhidimov, the Editor-in-Chief of the *Constitutional dawn* (*Konstitutsionna Zarya*) newspaper published in Salonica, who arrived in the city immediately after the Young Turk coup, was also disappointed by its narrow, dirty streets and by the extreme heat. However, he was pleasantly surprised by the plentiful “cafes, beer houses and hotels” that were missing in Sofia and jokingly noted that the beer served there made up for the lack of decent drinking water. D. Hadzhidimov considered bringing his family to Salonica, which apparently seemed a large and vibrant city to him at that time¹⁸. Only four years later, during the Balkan Wars, when he happened to be in the city again, he was no longer so enthusiastic and described the New Year’s celebration organized by the cream of the Bulgarian merchant community, as a social evening in small provincial town. D. Hadzhidimov continued to be a great admirer of Munich beer, but in 1912 he discovered in Salonica yet another, new entertainment to which he became addicted, i.e. cinema¹⁹.

The nightlife and entertainments offered by Salonica made a deep impression on its Bulgarian visitors. The cultural life in the city was particularly striking for the students in the Bulgarian schools. One of them, Vasil Uzunov, wrote the following: “A Bulgarian who came from his godforsaken village or from a small place called “town” to Salonica – the second capital of Turkey, had a lot to wonder about... In fact Salonica was not a Turkish city but a European one... To us, the

Hamidiye Blvd. (today’s Εθνικής Αμυνας) appeared on the site of the western wall, and the railway station and the Čair quarter (Kilkis neighbourhood) emerged where the eastern wall used to be. After the establishment of the Salonica Community in 1869 services were set up under it in charge of cleaning, lighting, sanitation, street maintenance and landscaping.

¹⁶ Β. Κολώνας, *Η Θεσσαλονίκη εκτός των τειχών. Εικονογραφία της συνοικίας των εξοχών*. Θεσσαλονίκη, University Studio Press, 2016, σ. 33.

¹⁷ Конституционна зоря, бр. 3 от 27 авг. 1908 г.

¹⁸ ЦДА, ф. 151Б, оп. 1, а.е. 412, л. 4–5, л. 8–9, л. 15–16.

¹⁹ ЦДА, ф. 151Б, оп. 1, а.е. 416, л. 19–20.

students, the city was an additional school. At that time [the 1890s – Y.K.] there was no theatre or opera anywhere in Macedonia, not even in Bulgaria, there were no actors, singers, there were no parlours or lounges in the European sense of the word. And Salonica had them all²⁰.

Yet, the greatest exultation among the Bulgarians was brought about by “the wondrous days of the constitution”, experienced by the city after the Young Turk coup (1908). “These are days of rapture and boundless enthusiasm, these are days, in which feelings float beyond reason... These are the first days of freedom – of the long-desired freedom that overflowed heaps of dead human bodies, that appeared suddenly and commenced its so whimsical life ... It seems to me that the people of Salonica are crazy, that this large city is overwhelmed by some kind of peculiar fury... Prudence is out of the question. Happy people. No trace of sorrow clouds their faces. It is as though freedom has stuck laughing masks to them”²¹. The frolic experienced by the city was also highlighted by Simeon Radev, who wrote that the entire population expressed with merriment, songs and music their joy of the unexpected freedom that had come their way: “I saw Turkish crowds with zourias and drums in front of them waving revolutionary banners and roaring in the middle of the streets the great words of the century; I saw priests walking in the processions, holding hands with Turkish imams and smiling at each other with their faces rapt with joy and still overcome by amazement, I saw our rebel Chetniks sitting at the cafés at the Salonica pier, with their Mannlicher rifles between their knees, I saw the chieftain Apostol Voivode embracing with Turkish officers”²². It is beyond dispute that the Bulgarians were highly impressed by the lavish celebrations: marches, banquets, games, parades, etc. that swept over the city after the Young Turk coup. The festivities reflect the view of Salonica as “a bright city because of the bright deeds that have adorned its history since the era when the revolutionary committees delivered a death sentence on tyranny and absolutism...” The people celebrated with enthusiasm, delighted both with the modest clothing of the officials and with the magnificent decoration of the public spaces²³. At this moment the already diverse population of the city was also joined by visitors from near and afar, constituting “an inconceivable blend of garments and customs”²⁴.

²⁰ В. Узунув, *Някога в Македонија (1886–1912)*. София, МНИ, 1931, с. 50–51.

²¹ Завоев, *1908 Писма от Македонија*, с. 71, с. 86–87.

²² ЦДА, ф. 77к, оп. 4, а.е. 326, л. 36–37.

²³ *Отечество*, бр. 41 от 11 юли 1909 г.

²⁴ Завоев, *1908 Писма от Македонија*, с. 80–82.

The picture of the free and celebratory city, however, proved to be fleeting and failed to ever overshadow the Bulgarian view of Salonica as a city of prisons. There is no doubt that initially the fortified city walls contributed in this respect. In the recollections of Tsarevna Miladinova, for example, the White Tower was still “a white beauty”²⁵. But in his travel notes from 1888 K. Shapkarev already referred to it as “the court of the Macedonian sufferers” and “the notorious prison where Bulgarian wretches rot”²⁶. Twenty years later P. Zavoiev referred to the “White Tower” with its old name: “the Bloody Tower”. It was fearsome and ugly, likened to a slaughterhouse, to an “old harlot”, and to “a meat-eating beast”²⁷. Vasil Uzunov, in his turn, saw both faces of this “tomb for living beings”: “How ugly, how gloomy, how scary the tower was on the inside and how bonny, majestic with its whitewashed walls it was on the outside!”²⁸

However, the sinister picture of the city was in fact created by the countless memories of Bulgarians about the Salonica prisons that were usually crowded not only with revolutionaries, but with ordinary people as well. An interesting explanation as to why the jails in Salonica were filled mostly with Bulgarians was provided by Hristo Kotsev, according to whom a person who could not give a bribe was constantly imprisoned. “The Jews were best aware of that and easily took advantage of this weakness of the Turks: immediately after their detention they right away opened their purses and got released... A Bulgarian preferred prison to parting with his savings earned in blood and sweat. Only when faced with hard time would he take even the shirt off his back and sell it to get off the hook”²⁹. Probably the reluctance of the poor Bulgarians to part with their saved money was among the reasons why they spent more time in prisons than their wealthier fellow citizens³⁰, but by far the most common reason for their imprisonment was the suspicion of or their actual involvement in revolutionary activities.

²⁵ Миладинова-Алексиева, *Епоха, земя и хора*, с. 116.

²⁶ *НА-БАН*, ф. 15к, а.е. 47, л. 57.

²⁷ Завоев, *1908 Писма от Македонија*, с. 84–85.

²⁸ Узунув, *Някога в Македонија*, с. 90.

²⁹ *БИА-НБКМ*, ф. 589, а.е. 1, л. 149–164.

³⁰ There is further evidence in this respect in the report provided by Robert Graves, according to which the Bulgarian merchant Spiro Surudzhiev had paid to the head of the Salonica police 200 TL and had been released from prison after the Salonica attacks (1903), and the Bulgarian at the neighbouring house was sentenced by the military court. See *Turkey N 2 (1904). Further correspondence respecting the affairs of South-Eastern Europe*. London, 1904, p. 30.

This is indeed the reason for the multiple descriptions of the Yedi Kule prison that have survived to this day. The most elaborate of them is part of the petition of the Bulgarians arrested in relation to the Salonica Affair (1901): H. Tatarchev, P. Toshev, A. Tanchev, B. Monchev, H. Yankov, H. Lisichkov, I. Hadzhinikolov, Father Yankov, Father Dimitria, Father I. Antonov, Father H. Zidarov etc. According to them the prison was elliptical, enclosed by stone walls some 12-15 metres high, with three towers called “Cellars”, each protruding five metres above them. The prison consisted of four two-storey buildings and one single-storey edifice, each divided into two rooms. Up to about 130 people were detained in rooms of 90 m² each, i.e. twice as many as doctors considered normal. The air in the premises was “toxic”, the dirt was high, and in order to go to the toilet the prisoners had to step on their cellmates³¹. Yordan Biolchev, a student at the Boys’ High School described the suffering of the inmates packed like “sardines”, who had insufficient room even to lie on their backs. He recounted the extreme heat, the raging diarrhea and dysentery and concluded that this prison was a scourge, especially for people from mountainous areas, as most of the Bulgarians were³². According to Georgi Kulishev, the cells were so narrow, that the detainees agreed among themselves and split into two groups. For one half of them to be able to lie down and have some sleep, the other half sat up in order to take up less space³³. Adding to all this was the fact that these premises most frequently had an informal Turkish chief, usually a high-profile criminal, who blackmailed the other prisoners for money³⁴.

In the summer of 1901, as a result of the petition by the Bulgarian prisoners, actively supported by the consular body, the Ottoman authorities decided to refit the Yedi Kule prison. A report by Alfred Biliotti, the British consul-general emphasized the efforts made by Tevfik Bey, who in his opinion was doing his best to improve the situation in the prisons³⁵. Only a year later the journalist E. Dillon published a text in *The Contemporary Review* magazine, where, *inter alia*, he depicted the terrible conditions in the Salonica jail³⁶. A memorandum on the situation at the Macedonian prisons enclosed with a letter by R. Graves of 8 March 1907 found that all the complaints of the Bulgarian prisoners of 1901 were still

³¹ ЦДАА, ф. 176к, оп. 1, а.е. 1525, л. 53–56.

³² *Ibid.* ф. 2069к, оп. 1, а.е. 425, л. 15–16.

³³ *Ibid.* ф. 890к, оп.1, а.е. 11, л. 10.

³⁴ ЦДАА, ф. 1932к, оп. 1, а.е. 205, л. 65–66.

³⁵ FO 421/191, p. 48.

³⁶ *The Contemporary review*, 1 Jul 1902, vol 82, p. 439.

valid, even though the authorities claimed that they were taking action to resolve the issues³⁷.

It seems that the Salonica prison did not undergo any change in the following years either, regardless of the fact that the city passed into Greek hands. Toma Nikolov, who served time at Yedi Kule both under the Ottoman rule and under the Greek regime, shared that after the Second Balkan War the situation was even worse than before. His description made it clear that the conditions were essentially the same: the prison was once again overcrowded with Bulgarians and it was even referred to as a *comitadjis*’ (insurgents’) jail, as it was claimed that everyone in it had cut Greek ears and noses. The detainees, about 500 persons, were once again “packed like sardines” in the four large rooms, there was widespread dirt, “moral harassment” and beating. The new element was that there was canvassing among the jailbirds by the prison management that whoever renounced the Exarchate and passed under the authority of the Patriarchate would be set free³⁸.

Notwithstanding the traumatic recollections of the persecutions, pursuits and penitentiaries, it seems that in the early 20th century the Bulgarian mental picture of the city was dominated by nostalgia. On the one hand, this was the nostalgia for youth and a by-gone lifestyle, clearly mirrored in Andrey Toshev’s memory about the poverty-stricken Turkish houses and small coffee-houses tucked away among them, “where one could stop by in the heat of summer, quench their thirst with a glass of ice cold lemonade, while watching with curiosity the calm, white-bearded Turks, sitting beside gurgling fountains, while quietly talking about daily life, solemnly taking draws from their hookah pipes and noisily sipping creamy coffee from large, round, white coffee cups with motley stripes at the edges”³⁹. On the other hand, this was the romantic memory of the big modern city, where everything was at a „higher level“ – the setting was more opulent, the school teachers were “university graduates, specialists, sophisticated”⁴⁰.

However, everything was indisputably dominated by the sorrow of losing the native home. Elena Kavrakirova recalled how in August 1913, along with 60 other Bulgarian families she bid farewell to the city from the deck of the Austrian steamer “Carlsbad”. “Salonica had never seemed so beautiful to me as it did in those wonderful evening lights ... I wailed and cried out, “Look how pretty it is”,

³⁷ FO 295/17.

³⁸ Т. Николов, *Спомени за Македонија*. София, Изток Запад, 2014, с. 343–345.

³⁹ А. Тошев, Солун (Из моите македонски спомени), *Македонија*, N 1195, 10 окт. 1930 г.

⁴⁰ МНИ, Спомен на Люба Калайджиева.

and my parents asked, “Why are you crying, if it is so pretty”, but I could barely speak for tears and just pointed my finger and uttered, “Salonica, Salonica...” and they, in their turn, also wept. The ship crept on and we drifted further and further away from our native lands and we never saw them again”⁴¹.

The sadness caused by the loss intertwined with the traumatic memory of the way in which this loss had occurred. Shortly after the outbreak of the Second Balkan War a brochure came out under the title: *St Bartholomew's Night in Salonica and the Heroic Defense by the Bulgarian Battalion* (*Vartolomeevata nosht v Solun i geroichnata zashchita na balgarskata družhina*), which persisted as a metaphor for the massive massacre of civilians in the Bulgarian historical memory⁴². It has been used on multiple occasions in a generic sense in the memoirs of Zaharia Shumlyanska: “June the Seventeenth 1913! You swept over Salonica as a short devastating storm that wipes out and destroys everything that got in its way. You buried the long-lasting dream of the Salonica Bulgarians for happiness and freedom ... For the Bulgarians in Salonica you are a veritable St Bartholomew's Night. You left in your wake only dead bodies, ruin and destruction...”⁴³

Thus after 1913 Salonica also became a city symbol of the Bulgarian-Greek clash over Macedonia directly associated with the Bulgarian loss and the persecutions of the Bulgarian population that followed.

In the following one hundred years the Bulgarian society sought various ways to surmount both the collapse of the national ideal and the personal tragedy sustained in the clans of the thousands of refugees that sought rescue in Bulgaria. One of the strands in which the immigration sought a way out is reflected in the activities of the Macedonian Scientific Institute (MSI) set up in Sofia in 1923, which initiated numerous publications containing recollections and research related to the history of Salonica. There should be no overlooking of the activities of the Macedonian cultural-and-educational and charity brotherhoods, the more so that their members were often members of the MSI and of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) and in their personal capacity contributed to the formation of the Bulgarian mental picture of the city in the interwar period⁴⁴.

⁴¹ БИА–НБКМ, ф. 867, а.е. 87, л. 233.

⁴² *Вартоломеевската нощ в Солун и героичната заштита на българската дружина*. Шумен, Издание Ив. Лисичков, 1913.

⁴³ ЦДА, ф. 1932к, оп. 4, а.е. 109, л. 74.

⁴⁴ For details on the topic of the activities of the Macedonian brotherhoods in Bulgaria see А. Гребенаров, *Легални и тайни организации на македонските бежанци в България*

To them Salonica continued to be the largest city in Macedonia, “the birth-place of St St Cyril and Methodius, the immortal creators of the Slavonic-Bulgarian script”; “a major cultural and educational centre of Macedonian Bulgarians” and “one of the most important centres of the revolutionary movement in Macedonia”, “the founding city of IMRO, which has been watching over the interests of our Homeland to this day”⁴⁵. To a greater or lesser extent this symbolism was present in the works of the emigrants from Macedonia and it undoubtedly created the most stable stereotypes in the perception of the city in Bulgaria. They exist in the travel notes of Petar Marinov, whose 1941 visit was the first one to the city he was not personally linked with⁴⁶. Evidently, the view of the Bulgarian emigrants from Macedonia was deeply embedded in the public consciousness even before World War II. It was also interwoven with affliction brought about by the dismantling of all Bulgarian Institutions that used to function in the city prior to 1913. “Unfortunately, only ruins have remained from the boys’ high school, as well as from our primary schools”, A Toshev wrote during his visit to Salonica during World War II. “Only the Girls’ High School has survived as a more solid three-story massive building... the old edifice that used to be occupied by the Boys’ High School at the time was still standing somehow as well. No trace of the Bulgarian church St St Cyril and Methodius ... No sign of our church St Demetrius, either”⁴⁷.

(1918–1947). София, МНИ, 2006. Lists of native Macedonian revolutionaries, army officers, volunteers, ministers, diplomats, Members of Parliament, professors, scholars, writers, publicists, artists, sculptors, etc. are published In: *Македонците в културно-политическия живот на България. Анкета от Изпълнителния комитет на македонските братства*. София, Ал. Паскалев и сие, 1918. On their activities prior to 1918 see for example С. Елдъров, *Македоно-одринските благотворителни братства в Княжество България (1903–1906) и Македоно-одринското движение в България*. In: *Национално-освободителното движение на македонските и тракийските българи*. София, МНИ, 1994–1997, Т. 3, с. 114–122, с. 239–248. The issue of the role of the refugees from Macedonia for the formulation of topics in Bulgarian literature is tackled in the study: С. Велкова, *Бежанци и бежанска култура в българската национална идеология и литература (1878–1944)*. В: Р. Заимова, Ю. Константинова (съст.), *Българи и гърци – черти от взаимните им представи*. София, ИБЦТ-БАН, 2014, с. 205–248.

⁴⁵ *Македонски алманах*. Издание на Централния Комитет на Македонските политически организации в Съединените щати, Канада и Австралия. Индианаполис, 1940, с. 23.

⁴⁶ П. Маринов, *Из Беломорието до Солун и обратно – 1941: пътни бележки и преживелици*. Пловдив, Интелексперт-94, 2010, с. 31.

⁴⁷ А. Тошев, *Из Беломорието и Македония*. София, Печатница Изгрев, 1941, с. 54–55.

In the Cold War years the visits of Bulgarians to Salonica were highly limited and so was the publication of literature related to the topic. However, the city and the dramatic events for which it provided a setting were still reflected in works of art that left a lasting mark in the memory of generations of Bulgarians. The generation that survived the horror of St Bartholomew's Night and the camps on Trikeri Island⁴⁸, although bearing the trauma itself, was not willing to make it known to the public. Indicative in this respect are the memoirs of Petar Kolisharkov, written by him only on his deathbed, despite the repeated pleas of activists related to the Macedonian emigration⁴⁹. Yet, there was apparent awareness that these events had to be documented and preserved. This explains the inclusion of scenes featuring the transfer of captives from Trikeri to Bulgaria on board the Varna ship, as well as their welcoming at the port of Varna, in a documentary chronicle dedicated to the Balkan Wars⁵⁰.

In the early years after 1913 the emphasis in the works of art dedicated to the topic was laid not so much, or at least not only, on the misfortunes experienced as on the impossibility for life to follow its usual course after them. As early as in February 1917 Konstantin Mutafov filed his play *The Trikeri Prisoner (Plennikat ot Trikeri)* with the Artistic Committee of the National Theatre. At that time he was the playwright of the theatre, which is a possible explanation for the quick staging of his play as early as in December of the same year⁵¹. The viewers obviously found the topic exciting, because in 1929 the first screen version of the play was produced, which however remained unfinished and there are only 12 minutes preserved from it today⁵².

⁴⁸ For details on the events in the Greek desert island see В. Сис, *Гробовете на Трикерии*. София, Фондация ВМРО, 1914.

⁴⁹ ЦДА, ф. 2069к, оп. 1, а.е. 429.

⁵⁰ For details see П. Кърджилев, *Кинохрониките, заснети по българските земи през Балканската война (26.IX.1912–17.V.1913)*. ВИС, 2018, N 1, с. 77–160. Another work entirely dedicated to this theme is the monograph П. Кърджилев, *Загадките на филма „Балканската война“*. София, Титра, 2006.

⁵¹ К. Тошева, *История на българския театър от 1904 г. до 1908 г.* Т. 3. София, АИ „Проф. Марин Дринов“, 1997, с. 146, с. 150.

⁵² The topic is addressed by Ани Златева. *Задочните срещи на Владимир Сис с българския театър (1917) и родното кино (1929)*. In: А. Златева (съст.) *Владимир Сис и България. Сборник статии от Националната научна конференция, проведена на 22–23 ноември 2003 в Хасково*. София, Стигмати Бохемия клуб, 2006, с. 158–187. For full details on the 1929 film, see П. Кърджилев, *Български игрални филми. Анотирана илюстрирана филмография*, т. 1/ 1915–1948. София, Петър Берон, 1987, с. 130–131.

Probably the popularity of *The Trikeri Prisoner* is due to the intricate question it raises: how can one move on, when his entire world has disappeared in a whirlwind of military or political cataclysms. The horror of the wars is personified in the „grave island“ of Trikeri, where everybody dies – physically or figuratively – because even those that return cannot continue their lives. The focus is on the idea that slavery can be outlived, but those who have survived the dread that they would remain forever “banished alive to this grave”, die again because there is no place for them in the new age⁵³. An interesting additional emphasis was laid by the authors of the television theatre production under the same title commissioned in 1993 by the Bulgarian National Television (BNT), probably in connection with the anniversary of the Second Balkan War. Vladi Kirov, the producer, and Nedyalko Delchev, the director, highlighted as a major issue in their performance that of a whole generation of Bulgarian children that had to live their lives without fathers.

The theme of the impossible life after the violence suffered during the Balkan Wars has obviously not been exhausted and is still on the agenda of Bulgarian society. It is the topic of the novelette *The Migration (Preselenieto)* by Prof. Boyan Biolchev issued by the *Trud* Publishing House in the last days of 2018. In a uniquely emotional way Prof. Biolchev, who has an ancestral relationship with Salonica⁵⁴, reveals the tragedy of ordinary people forced to leave homes and seek a different life for their families. The Turkish atrocities, the horror of Trikeri, the suffering caused by the loss of the loved ones, the mercantile attitude towards human destinies prevail over all bright examples and intentions and rule out any future for his characters. The fire that breaks out in their new home in Bulgaria, evidently epitomizing the blaze of war, incinerates a whole generation, and the single survivors are marked by lifelong trauma. Prof. Biolchev’s novelette portrays the tragic events of 1912–1913 without nostalgia, hatred, pathos or victorious marches. The story of an entire generation of Bulgarians, related to that of the same generation

⁵³ К. Мутафов, *Пленникът от Трикери, драма в три действия*. София, Б. А. Кожухаров, 1918.

⁵⁴ Boyan Biolchev’s maternal grandfather Ivan Jingov from Kilkis, had a printing house in Salonica. He was involved in the digging of the tunnel during the attack against Bank Ottoman, then he was detained during the Second Balkan War and exiled on the island of Trikeri. He was released due to the vindication of the consul of Austria-Hungary and then moved to Sofia with his family. His wife, Grozdanka, came from the village of Bugarievo, today a neighbourhood in Salonica, where she finished an elementary school and worked in the weaving factory in the city. The information has been extracted from an interview with Prof. B. Biolchev recorded in 2018.

of Turks and Greeks, is told with pain, humaneness and professionalism that goes far beyond the narrow nationalist perspective.

A similar way of presentation of the events was also used in the premiere debut documentary *Three Candles. Scars from the Balkan Wars (Tri sveshti: Belezi ot Balkanskite voyni)* written by Diana Zacharieva and produced by Gospodin Nedelchev. The reason for its creation was again the family story of its author, whose great-grandfather Nikola Iliev Krastev, served in supplementing battalions of the 14th infantry “Macedonian” regiment. He was taken prisoner of war and died on Trikeri, and the lack of knowledge of what had happened to him provoked his great-granddaughter Diana to make a film, in order to fill the void in the family memory. The author believes that an entire generation of Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians were victims, while Trikeri was the culmination of the Balkan Wars. In her film Salonica is present as the scene of the Bulgarian-Greek collision, a place, where the tragedy of the Bulgarians commences⁵⁵.

The works of art dedicated to the traumatic events of 1913 express the need of the Bulgarian society to discuss these events. They help this discussion, suppressed for many years in the name of good Bulgarian-Greek relations, take place and once again prove that in order to be outgrown, history should not be held back or suppressed. Otherwise absurd fears bred by irrational allegations are fueled, such as the 1970 record in the Dragan Zografov’s memoirs that “to this very day there are suffering Bulgarians in Trikeri Island exiled there and completely forgotten”.⁵⁶

Another episode of the Bulgarian presence in Salonica that has left lasting traces in the national memory involved the attacks of the *Gemitzides* (boatmen) that shook the city in April 1903. The first work of art dedicated to them was Anton Strashimirov’s novel *Slaves (Robi)*. Its first part, dedicated to the kidnaping of the American missionary Ellen Stone, came out in 1929, the second one, featuring the Salonica attacks, was published in 1930, and the third one was never finished. The novel has been conceived as an epic of the Macedonian struggles and its aim is to present in a romantic light the events of the early years of the 20th century and to capture the reader’s imagination, which is why the historical episodes and heroic

⁵⁵ Interview with Diana Zacharieva in the *Kultura.bg (Culture.bg)* broadcast of the Bulgarian National Television of 16 March 2015 (<https://www.bnt.bg/bg/a/tri-sveshti-belezi-ot-balkanskite-vojni-po-sledite-na-ba-lgarskite-geroi>) and a personal interview with her held on 24 April 2019. The documentary: <https://filmfreeway.com/408354>.

⁵⁶ РИМ – Благоевград, спомени на Драган Зографов, инв. № 2.4.2400.

urges in it are intertwined with a romantic love story, spy affairs and sensational intrigues.

The affiliation of Anton Strashimirov to the left wing of the Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation (IMARO) is clearly evident in his novel, where, along with the *Gemitzides*, certain well-known Bulgarian revolutionaries also appear occasionally, such as Yane Sandanski, Hristo Tatarchev, Hristo Matov, etc. The author portrays idealized images of the freedom fighters described as “giants of men, Europeans”, tough and well-built, rough and abrupt, intelligent and humane, fanatics vis-à-vis the revolutionary cause, blindly devoted to their people. Anton Strashimirov, who published the *Cultural Unity (Kulturno edinstvo)* Magazine in Salonica in the 1908-1909 period, was sufficiently familiar with the city and managed to turn it into a majestic and fateful setting for the events he recreated. The stuffy nights, the tumultuous sea, the mysterious Olympus and the “rusty medieval monsters”, as its prisons are qualified, are imprinted in the reader’s mind. The pictures of the city “suffocated” by people bristled up as beasts, a city found “dead” by dawn after the attacks, are full of drama.

The novel seeks to satisfy the need for heroes, which seems to be constant for the Bulgarian society, judging by the interest in this subject. In 1993, a second edition of the novel *Slaves (Robi)* came out with a dedication “to the young idealists from Macedonia, referred to as “Gemitzides”, who, with their exploit in Salonica in 1903 against the Turkish Empire highlighted Bulgarian history forever”. However, prior to the second edition of *Robi*, three more works dedicated to the same events were published.

The novel *The Abnegators (Samoobrechente)* by Dimitar Sprostranov came out in 1964 and over 30 years after Anton Strashimirov’s book once again raised the issue of the struggles of the Bulgarians in Salonica. Its publication became possible after a change in the policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), which abandoned Macedonianism in the 1958–1964 period⁵⁷. D. Sprostranov, a pupil in the elementary schools in Salonica, was familiar with the city, with the people and ways in it, and they all found their way to the pages of his work. The latter also features the rich Bulgarian merchants, supporters of the Exarchate policy, whose offices are located in “dark and unkempt” arcades, away from the public eye, but their “palaces” are to be found in the aristocratic neighbourhood *Pirgi*. The “working people who earn their living with beads of sweat on their forehead”:

⁵⁷ Н. Кайчев, Българите във Вардарска Македония в двустранните отношения на България с Югославия и Република Македония (1944–2012), *Македонски преглед*, 2013, N 3, с. 63–82.

mostly originating from Kilkis, but also masons from Debar, milkmen and bakers from the Kostur (Kastoria) region, butchers from the Bitola and Ohrid regions, all of them driven away from their native lands by the Turks. They work in the big city to provide livelihoods for their families and live in the Vardar neighborhood, with their small artisan workshops, retail outlets and gardens located there as well. There is a vivid description of the Bulgarian Boys' High School, featured with the revolutionary fervour of students and teachers, with the celebrations of Cyril and Methodius Day, with the merriment in the *Beş Çinar* city garden, with the orchestras, the uniforms, the gatherings. A description of the city is not missing either: with its gray houses, luxury hotels and pubs, with the “dormant” sea and the “marvelous gleams of the sunset” over its high tide. Rising high above this “exuberance of colours” are the Yedi Kule towers that once defended the city against “the knights of Kuber and Samuil, and now they have taken in their descendants in their dungeons”.

The idea of D. Sprostranov's *The Abnegators (Samoobrechente)* is to depict the attacks as “forerunner of the fire that will spread over the entire Macedonian land”, and their perpetrators as freedom-loving young people willing to throw their death in the face of the oppressors of their Homeland. A different conception has governed Georgi Danailov, who claims in his memoirs that the idea of a play dedicated to the Salonica assailants occurred to him during the shooting of the film *Measure for Measure (Mera spored mera)* (1981), and his aim was to comment on “the meaning of self-sacrifice, on one's desire to remain anonymous, so as to be beyond recognition even in death”. Though based on historical facts, his work *The Salonica Conspirators (Sazaklyatnitsi v Solun)* (1983) presents the images of the revolutionaries in a generic way and focuses on issues common to all mankind, such as terrorism, fanaticism and their limited explanations. The author makes an attempt to grasp the psychology “of these young fellow countrymen”, less obsessed with freedom than with death⁵⁸.

The documentary novel *The Salonica Assailants (Solunskite atentatori)* written by Kosta Tsarnushanov, (1987) focuses by far more on the historical aspects, even though the events are narrated in the form of a novel. The author even attaches a list of the sources used by him and dedicates his work to his wife, Gena Veleva, “a committed fighter for the freedom of Macedonia”. Entirely in the spirit of the imposed socialist ideology, K. Tsarnushanov emphasizes the intention of the assailants to “mine” the economic interests of the West European capitalist states –

⁵⁸ Г. Данаилов, *Доколкуто си спомням*. В. Търново, Абагар, 2002, с. 683–686.

supporters of slavery”, and underscores the importance of their action as a “prelude to the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising – the highest peak in the Bulgarian national revolution after the etic April Uprising”⁵⁹. The theme of the Salonica assailants is a historical one and it was very convenient for the governing Communist Party in those years, as it allowed the simultaneous exposition of the social and national dimensions of the revolutionary struggle aimed against “the European capital and Turkish oppressors”.

The topic of the Salonica assailants did not fade away after the collapse of the socialist regime. In November 2014, Georgi Danailov’s play was staged at the National Theatre, where it was performed for four theatrical seasons. According to its director, Stoyan Radev, the purpose of his production was to raise “the startling questions”: “Whose is the land where you were born and can you call it your own, should you defend it and at what cost“, who can dispose of life, what is love and what is freedom⁶⁰. The universal ring, common to all humanity, that the director is trying to impart to the play is obvious, and so are its topical dimensions related to the terror threat in the modern era. Salonica is present there only as a location of the historical developments, without playing any part in them. The text written by G. Danailov, who has no ancestral ties to the city, is conducive of drawing an analogy with the attacks of the 21st century and distinguishes between the present-day terrorists and the *Gemitzides*, who did not want human casualties, which is why the author qualifies their terrorism as “idyllic”⁶¹.

Salonica is also present solely as a backdrop in two other high profile themes of key significance for the Bulgarian memory: about the saint brothers Cyril and Methodius and about St Demetrius of Salonica. For Bulgarians the red-letter Day of the brothers of Salonica (11/24 May) is related to the role of the medieval Bulgarian state for the dissemination of the Slavonic script and literature and with the spiritual achievements of our Bulgarian people. Salonica, which in the 9th century was part of the Byzantine Empire and never became part of Bulgaria, remained in the symbolism of the red-letter day only as the hometown of the creators of the Glagolitic alphabet⁶². The idea of the link between the teachers of the Slavs and the Bulgarians in Salonica was used for the purpose of their national mobilization

⁵⁹ К. Църнушанов, *Солунските атентатори. Документален роман*. София, Отечествен фронт, 1987, the fourth cover.

⁶⁰ Comment by Stoyan Radev in the playbill of the performance of 2014.

⁶¹ Данаилов, *Доколкото си спомням*, с. 683–686.

⁶² See Български екзарх Стефан I. *Сборник, избрани речи, слова, поучения, статии и архипастирски напътствия*. София, Сиела, 1998, с. 227–230.

in the 1860s and 1870s⁶³. However, gradually the phrase *Salonica beacon* (*Solunski svetilnik*) became more of a synonym of the Bulgarian educational institutions that had existed before the Second Balkan War, while the link with the teachers of the Slavs remained symbolic⁶⁴.

The spiritual bond established by the refugees from Macedonia between Salonica and the Bulgarians persisted as symbolism after World War II and was interwoven in the idea of the development of Bulgarian education, science and culture. And this is exactly how it was embedded in Slav Karaslavov's trilogy *The Brothers of Salonica* (*Solunskite bratya*) first published in 1978. It begins with quotes from the *Detailed Biography of Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher* (*Prostrannoto zhitie na Konstantin-Kiril Filosof*) and from the *Repose of St Cyril* (*Uspenie Kirilovo*), which emphasize that the city of Salonica is "the fatherland of our Venerable Father Cyril ... who was Bulgarian by nationality", but the city is virtually absent from the narrative, which is entirely devoted to the life and work of the brothers of Salonica, their disciples and the Bulgarian royal family that preserved and disseminated their works⁶⁵.

An interesting link was established as early as in the middle of the 19th century by Konstantin Danovski, between the saint brothers Cyril and Methodius and St Demetrius of Salonica. While recounting the "revelation" he had experienced in 1854 at the church of the Wonderworker, where he had stopped for worship on his way to the Holy Mountain, the Father explained that "the ill-fated city, the homeland of the Slavic enlighteners, will be a new Slavic second Jerusalem"⁶⁶. However, it seems that at the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century this connection was abandoned by the Bulgarians, probably because St Demetrius was included in the Greek national narrative. His popularity as a patron of the Bulgarians increased due to the novel *The Wonderworker of Salonica* (*Solunskiyat Chudotvorets*) written by Fani Popova-Mutafova in 1929 on the occasion of the joint celebration of three jubilees: 1000th Anniversary of the reign of Tsar Simeon, 50th Anniversary of the Liberation and 10th Anniversary of the

⁶³ See *Македония*, N 15, 8 март 1869 г.; *Право*, N 11, 25 май 1873 г.

⁶⁴ See *Светилник*. Благоевград, Народна просвета, 1983; *Светилник: Национална хуманитарна гимназия „Св. Св. Кирил и Методий“ (бивша Солунска)*. Благоевград, Б.и., 2005.

⁶⁵ С. Караславов, *Солунските братя (трилогия)*. София, Народна младеж, 1980.

⁶⁶ К. Дъновски, *Едно откровение в солунската черква Св. Димитрий Касъма Джамиси, дадено на отца Константина Дъновски през юношеството му в гр. Солун на 10 април 1854 г.*

ascension of Tsar Boris III to the Bulgarian throne⁶⁷. Because of her liking of the fascist regime for nearly two decades after 1944 Fani Popova-Mutafova was not allowed to publish her works. Her book about St Demetrius of Salonica came out in a revised version in 1969 and has had several editions since then.

The novel *The Wonderworker of Salonica (Solunskiyat Chudotvoret)* transformed the saint from a patron of the Greeks into a patron of the Bulgarians by blending the historical facts (the conquest of Salonica during the Fourth Crusade in 1204) and the legend of the escape of the miraculous icon of St Demetrius, which landed in Tarnovo (in 1185) to become the patron protector of the Asen dynasty, and via it of the entire Bulgarian people. As a genuine myth maker, Fani Popova-Mutafova literally “stole” St Demetrius, putting words in the mouth of Tsar Ivan Asen I, that Demetrius, the Christic martyr, who had left the “Salonica bishopric and the Roman temple” and had come to the aid of the Bulgarians, had been destined to help the latter in their struggle against the Byzantines. Somehow quite naturally the temporal boundaries are blurred and one wonders if the appeal: “Bulgarians! This is not the right time to sit idle! Let us act quickly in raising arms and driving the oppressors away! Be as adamant as a diamond, trust not in their slanders, nor in their supplications, neither be seduced by their gold!” refers to the 12th century or to the period in which the novel was written. However, over time any revanchism becomes meaningless and today the emotions concerning St Demetrius are mostly associated with pilgrimage tourism to the church in Salonica, which holds his relics⁶⁸.

Salonica appears also in Dimitar Dimov’s classical work *Tobacco (Tyutyun)*, first published in 1951. The writer was related to Yane Sandanski and lost his father in the Second Balkan War, but he was not emotionally attached to the refugee memory. Perhaps this enabled him to capture and convey very accurately the Bulgarian emotions relevant to the city. His character Kostov has studied at Salonica and recollects “the strange excitement” aroused in his soul by the Macedonian revolutionaries as they lay on the bombs. Next came his exultation evoked by the *Hurriyet* and the socialist ideas, his belief in equality and justice. Not least, a picture of love emerges in his memories embodied in the well-educated and beautiful

⁶⁷ More on the celebrations and their reflection in the Bulgarian literature see in A. Хранова, Старите дрехи на царя, или за историята като политическа алегория. В: Ю. Константинова (съст.) *Балканите: модернизация, идентичности, идеи. Сборник в чест на проф. Н. Данова*. София, ИБЦТ-БАН, 2011, с. 748–761.

⁶⁸ Е. Троева, Между туризма и поклонничеството: посещения на българи в Солун. В: *Солун и българите*, с. 613–638.

Greek girl he wants to marry. D. Dimov defines these memories of his character as “wondrous and sadly pleasant”⁶⁹.

Ottoman Salonica provided Bulgarians with opportunities for economic, political and cultural expression of their abilities. It struck them with the sea, with the luxury hotels, restaurants and coffee-houses, with its cultural life and diverse population. The bitterness of the loss – of home, youth, love, ideals – dominated the memory of Salonica of at least two generations of Bulgarians, most of which associated with the city. The first refugees from Ottoman Macedonia that came to Bulgaria at the turn of the 19th century wanted to return to their native lands by all means. That generation believed that Salonica was the largest political, economic, cultural and revolutionary centre of Macedonia and as such it should be part of the Bulgarian state. The military losses sustained by Bulgaria in the 20th century modified the bond of the Bulgarians with the city from geographic to spiritual. It was precisely in this sense that it was intertwined in the festive symbolism of the Day of the Slavonic Script and Culture, including the pride in the successes of the Bulgarian education, and dominated the public notions in the era of socialism.

After 1989, there was revisiting of the topics of the Salonica assailants, of St Bartholomew’s Night in Salonica, of the concentration camps on Trikeri Island and in more general terms of violence as part of the national struggle and the loss of the native home. The works dedicated to these topics were most commonly created by descendants of refugees that used them as a vehicle to revive the ancestral memory, sought self-cognition and construction of the past-future link. It is precisely because Bulgarians associate Salonica mainly with their freedom fighting that its image is dominated by the themes of death and self-sacrifice, of fear and courage, of prisons and concentration camps. To them it is simultaneously a city of prisons and a city of light, a city of youth and nostalgia, of education and pogrom, of economic opportunity and wasted effort.

⁶⁹ Д. Димов, *Тютюн*. София, Български писател, 1967, с. 233–234.

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Yura Konstantinova

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
yura.konstantinova@balkanstudies.bg*

ON THE PAST, MEMORY, RECOLLECTIONS AND HISTORY OF THE BULGARIANS IN “SIMVASILEVUSA”¹

Malamir Spasov

Abstract: *In the past one feels at home. One comes from that home, where the ones before him are, to go back one day and become one of them, a home for those that are to come. Think of it, that home is in one and one is that home. That's why the past is cozy. Our awareness of the past is rooted in memory. Memory permeates all aspects of our life. Even our present is largely dedicated to memory, insofar as we spend a great part of it in fortifying our ties with the past. Our memory of the past is an indispensable condition for our sense of identity. We need the collective memory, i.e. the recollections of others, in order to affirm our own recollections, and in this way give them value. The opposite is also fully true, for life is fundamentally dialogical and the discovery of self is unthinkable without the others. If memory and history are processes penetrating the past, the vestiges of the past would put one on the track of processes that have produced that past. Often such traces are sparse, which makes them all the more valuable. Sometimes a few old photographs are the only remnants that have remained in place of one's roots. In other cases only recollections replace places left long ago. Well, such places don't have to be outstanding in order to be unforgettable. For many Bulgarians Salonica is just that kind of place. But Salonica is not some ordinary, unremarkable and insignificant city.*

Keywords: *Bulgarians, History, Memory, Recollections, Salonica*

¹ That is the “Second Capital” after Constantinople (from Greek συμ-βασιλεύω, literally *co-rule*), as the Greeks commonly called Salonica. To refer to the city as *συμβασιλεύουσα πόλη* was a usage begun in Byzantine times that continued until World War II.

The Past

In the past one feels at home. One comes from that home, where the ones before him are, to go back one day and become one of them, a home for those that are to come. Think of it, that home *is* in one and one *is* that home. That's why the past is cozy.

In one of his key texts, historian David Lowenthal endeavors to point out to us, his contemporaries, why studying the past might be to our benefit. Maybe not so much the past as such, as objectively given, whatever that may mean, but rather the advantages of becoming cognizant of the past, i.e. the past as a subjective, man-constructed entity. Such advantages are taken to be indisputable and a good starting point for reflection on what has been lost behind.

Among these advantages, Lowenthal puts familiarity first, more precisely the access to *knowledge* that makes the past familiar; in this way the past becomes closer to one, and the future, more understandable. After knowledge comes *affirmation*, i.e. citing tradition as historic precedent in order to legitimize present practices. Follows guidance by example, meaning belief in the idea that the present may learn from the past, belief in development and progress. Then, *identity*, or the awareness of personal and communal identity, i.e. perceiving the past as a *conditio sine qua non* for constructing the feeling of individual and collective identity (in our opinion, probably one of the most essential benefits of the past). Finally, there is the enhancement, or the diachronic enrichment of our experience (ties with bygone persons and events, understood as widening of life's scope), as well as the escape from the "here and now" (the past as alternative to an unacceptable present), etc.²

Naturally, the benefits of the past mix together and probably change with epochs, cultures, nations, societies, groups, individuals, as well as stages of development and life. Such benefits increase in direct proportion to the increase of the past, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Paradoxically, the more lost behind, the bigger the benefit for the loser.

But few processes are one way or one sided, and the past as process "taking cognizance of" is not one of them. "The evils attributed to the past", writes in that context Lowenthal, "are as manifold and complex as the benefits in whose wake they often follow"³. In other words, hand in hand with the benefits of the past

² See for a detailed review David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

there appear some apparently bad consequences. As a rule they are conditioned by a past, which in one way or another is perceived as unwanted, as a past that should be forgotten or altered. (As a matter of fact there is no necessary connection between unwanted past and bad consequences.) However, bad consequences may arise from a past which, due to its remoteness in time appears so glorious (or has been so much glorified), that it would crush and depersonalize the present, which, besides being too close, begins to appear also as too insignificant, a very surrogate of the past of olden times, filled with meaning and dignity.

To sum up, the awareness of the past brings knowledge, both regarding the past in question and the present. It is a knowledge that creates norms and legitimizes actions, strengthens individual, communal and national identities, affirming first the individual, then the community and the nation in their own eyes.

However, interpretations of the past glorify it so routinely, that it would be surprising if reality did not appear disenchanting in comparison. An overdedication to such a past, and to the past in general, leads to consequences that are usually bad (as happens with all overdone things). An overdedication is a loss of balance which inevitably hampers development and ruins individuality, any individuality: personal, communal and national.

At this junction an analogy appears between person and community, which we deem important. There seems to be an obvious similarity between the immanent need of a person to construct a meaningful biography for her/himself, and the natural effort of a community or the nation to construct for themselves a glorious history. Of course, there is nothing new in this analogy. It is a trivial truth that any heritage is simultaneously beneficial and dangerous. A person's effort to simultaneously follow and negate parental advice strongly resembles the collective effort to deal with a past simultaneously respected and resented. For individuals and nations alike, their past is food for identity, but it is also something they must leave behind in order to achieve their present. "How to benefit from the past", writes on this occasion David Lowenthal, "without being swamped or corrupted by it is a universal dilemma. All legacies need to be both revered and rejected. (...) Groups like individuals face this dilemma in manifold modes"⁴.

Thus, the attitude towards the past is always ambiguous, no matter whether the individual or the nation is concerned. Juxtaposed against the wide backdrop of the past, the micro frame of the individual and the macro frame of the nation are confronted by analogous dilemmas. It is an analogy that remains potent through-

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

out the ages, in every debate between tradition and innovation, in every squabble involving ancient and modern. It is a principle that adulation and negation contain their own contradiction. In the respect for tradition the seeds of modernistic rebellion hide, and in that rebellion respect for tradition is felt. In the last resort, both the nostalgia of tradition and the impatience of modernism exist only thanks to the discourse of the other. Figuratively said, every dogma is born as a revolutionary idea and every revolutionary idea is a future dogma, and their dialectic, besides being a necessity, is also the mechanism that puts them in motion and, probably also, to an extent, the mechanism that creates them. However, be it a traditionalistic or modernistic society, “every generation requires a *modus vivendi* that at once embraces and abandons precedent”⁵. And every historically aware society, like every independent and self-aware person, should decide for itself, anew, the balance between these two constructs. As said, taking cognizance of the past is neither a one way nor a one sided process, therefore change is as inevitable as is tradition. “Becoming an adult”, writes David Lowenthal, “does not mean leaving the child in us behind, but rather accepting the child within us, letting us go back from time to time”⁶.

There is a body of opinion that understanding the past as a temporal field different from our own is a notion that we owe to Western thought, which has gradually taken shape during the last two or three decades. It may be a coincidence or not, but it is during the same period that people began to talk about historians as a self-conscious professional community. To put it simply yet not simplistically, what historians are mainly looking for in their work with the past are new facts that would enable them to resolve old dilemmas (except when they would be looking for old facts to resolve new dilemmas). There is, however, a peculiarity in becoming aware of the past, which appears to us rather important, yet somehow is always in the shadows. It is the undisputable fact that while penetrating the past, interpreting it and making it into history, historians always write, or rather rewrite, history from the viewpoint of contemporaneity, and in the course of action they often, if not always, rearrange data and change conclusions. In that sense, authentic is not so much the past itself, as the notion of the past, constructed “here and now”. Every portrait is a self-portrait of the artist, and in every narrative the consciousness of its author is reflected, and history is also a narrative, like literature.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

This text began with the generalization that in the past one is at home. In this vein, we could say that one would feel even more at home in *one's own* past. In other words, the feeling of closeness to the past is enhanced times over, when, living in the present, one impresses one's sign on the past and makes it one's own. It is another problem that, feelings notwithstanding, the stronger that personal impression on the past, the bigger the distance to a real knowledge of the past, hence to a clear picture of the present and understanding of oneself. Probably it is the good old belief in progress, i.e. the belief that the present may be changed and even improved, is in the basis of that insatiable appetite to transform the past. It is logical to have as basis of that appetite the benefits of the past, naturally hand in hand with the possible bad consequences. The reinterpretation of the past in contemporary terms is an inevitable process, and probably there is nothing bad in that process as such. The problems start to arise when the persons doing the reinterpretation, do not realize clearly what they are doing, and so let themselves be controlled by the process. Maybe that is why, like in a closed system in which action and reaction balance one another, the more radical the negation of a certain past, the stronger the dependency on that past. In any case, changing the past is as inevitable as the past itself. Moreover, changing the past affects most of all the changer. However, by taking cognizance of all that, we understand better the past, the present and ourselves too.

It has been said that the charm of the past is rooted in the fact that it is different from the present, that if "yesterday" were just like "today", nobody would yearn for that "yesterday"⁷. Actually people don't yearn for the past so much because it is different, but just because it is past. The charm of the past is that it is past. The past is a thing ended, it has completeness, hence the accompanying feelings of plenitude, stability, immutability and even eternity, none of which are concomitant with the "here and now" that always open, chaotic and threatened present. The past is a past *perfect*. Or nearly... That's why it is cozy and homely.

Memory

Our awareness of the past is rooted in memory. Memory permeates all aspects of our life. Even our present is largely dedicated to memory, insofar as we spend a great part of it in fortifying our ties with the past. Our memory of the past is an indispensable condition for our sense of identity. "Memory", ruminated

⁷ For details, see *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Hume, it is “the source of personal identity”⁸. And by identity we mean “who we are” and “where we are coming from”, and that is the foundation on which whatever we say and do acquires meaning. Minus a memory we would not be conscious of the cause and effect chain that forms our personal identity. Thus memory, our ability to remember and identify with our past gives value, goal and meaning to our existence.

The past is an indivisible part of our Ego. To know what kind of a person we were at the least affirms that we were, i.e., that we are. Every moment of our existence we are the sum of all our past moments and the result of all our past experiences. There can be no “I am” without “I was”. For the ancient Greeks, for example, and probably also for other peoples of Antiquity, to forget the past was equalized with death, for the loss of memory destroys personality, devoiding life of meaning. And that’s not just an abstract construction. There are not a few cases of amnesiacs that eventually lose their identity. The dead have no memories, so people without memories are dead.

The past we remember is both personal and collective. But memory, being a form of consciousness, is only personal. It is inimitable. By nature it is subjective and limited. It is intimate, like our own death. Paraphrasing Bataille’s saying “if you die, it is not I who dies”⁹, we could say “if I remember, it is not you who remembers”. Our personal memory, like our being, is locked between birth and death. Its nebulous beginnings are lost somewhere in our childhood. We fill it up, however, adding to our own recollections the recollections of the ones preceding us, our forbearers. For example, without what we have remaining of their memories, it would have been necessary to invent ourselves incessantly, and that is an impossible order. As to memory, our personal memory disappears with us. Except if it should become a shared memory, a part of the remembrances of somebody else, or should be come history, something like a home for those after us.

To sum up: the roots of our awareness of the past are in memory. Memory, in its turn, is an indispensable condition for our sense of identity. And the sense of identity is probably the most important benefits from the past, for it gives life meaning. There is a similarity between the need of the individual to construct a meaningful life history, and the urge of the nation to construct an honorable past. Groups also mobilize their collective memory to produce a lasting group iden-

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁹ Ж. Батай, *Еротизмът*. София, Критика и хуманизъм, 1998, с. 20.

tity. Through memory and recollection, the past buttresses the sense of identity, whether personal, group, or national.

All this has prompted David Lowenthal to compare the contemporary effort of nations to have a past with a contemporary Crusade¹⁰. Analogically, for many individuals to reveal their own past becomes a really important personal goal.

Recollections

"The past", in the words of Harold Pinter, "is what you remember, imagine you remember, convince yourself you remember, or pretend to remember"¹¹. We need the collective memory, i.e. the recollections of others, in order to affirm our own recollections, and in this way give them value. The opposite is also fully true, for life is fundamentally dialogical and the discovery of self is unthinkable without the others. There is no individual, and probably no nation that is entirely original. Thus, nobody can claim that s/he has found herself or himself all on their own, that is impossible. "The first man" is impossible, as in the unfinished autobiographical novel of Camus with the same title.

Although in our reality the past is physically untouchable (as is the future), it is an important part of our psyche (thanks to collective memory), and of our body (thanks to genetic memory). In the framework of the individual human being, the boundaries between these concepts are indistinct, unlike the boundaries of the human being itself. Death naturally plays a leading role in the individual and general planning of things. Wo/man is a mortal, finite and discontinuous being (as Bataille would have it). And that inexorable fact is probably an essential part of the force that puts into motion the whole synthesis of past, memory and recollections, the mechanism which constructs to a great extent our identity, and thanks to which that identity is included in a vast unifying retrospective network, opposed to the terror of ages of oblivion. All need their recollections, for they are what "keep the wolf of insignificance from the door"¹². Probably to no avail, if we think of evolution, but that is another matter. The discontinuous, finite and simply mortal being will probably always seek a road to continuity. In that sense,

¹⁰ For detail, see Lowenthal, *The Past*, p.26.

¹¹ Thomas P. Adler, "Pinter's Night: a stroll down memory lane", *Modern Drama* 17 (1974), pp. 461–465.

¹² See Lowenthal, *The Past*, p. 324; Saul Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet*. Viking, 1970, p. 190.

memory and recollections are a road to infinity, as they transcend the limits of the human being as such.

Every death naturally obliterates innumerable recollections, but collective memory, hence history too, is potentially immortal, at least the history that has been written down, at least the history in the framework of culture with a capital C, i.e. civilization. History depends on memory and recollections, and memory and recollections have history in them. We enrich Grand History by adding to it our remembrances, our personal and inherited memory. History in its turn enriches us, with the meaningfulness of an honorable past, which is superior to and transcends the individual. In the words of David Lowenthal, “to know we are ephemeral lessees of age-old hopes and dreams that have animated generations of endeavor secures our place – now to rejoice, now to regret – in the scheme of things”¹³. Every individual would use the opportunity to inscribe herself or himself in a bigger, hence more important, cosmos. That is why our memory often would turn momentous events involving society as a whole into idiosyncratic personal experiences, Grand History into personal recollections and stories, seeking out our place in collective memory and history.

Why is the past seen as an indispensable condition for constructing a sense of identity, and why identity is probably a most important benefit of the past, becomes clear when we cast a look back. Simply, the wholeness of a person depends completely on that person’s identification with earlier stages of her or his development. There ways in which a person identifies with the previous Egos of her or his innumerable past moments are many, various and probably hard to classify. Traditionally, most people sustain the ties with their past Egos through their attachment to a birthplace, or a place with which they connect an important part of their life. People who do not have such ties probably have to invent one, or directly create a new identity with the help of other people’s pasts. “Those bereft of ancestral locales”, writes on this occasion David Lowenthal, “forge identities through other pasts. (...) Lack of links in new lands leads many emigrants to romanticize remote homelands”¹⁴. Even traumatic and hurtful recollections remain an essential part of each individual emotional history. As a matter of fact, there is no national history devoid of emotions either.

If memory and history are processes penetrating the past, the vestiges of the past would put one on the track of processes that have produced that past¹⁵. Often

¹³ Lowenthal, *The Past*, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94-95.

¹⁵ See for a detailed review *Ibid.*, p. 292.

such traces are sparse, which makes them all the more valuable. Sometimes a few old photographs are the only remnants that have remained in place of one's roots. In other cases only recollections replace places left long ago. Well, such places don't have to be outstanding in order to be unforgettable.

Salonica and the Bulgarians

For many Bulgarians, Salonica is just that kind of place. But Salonica is not some ordinary, unremarkable and insignificant city. It is “the city of Cyril and Methodius”, with significance “for the wellbeing of Macedonia [that] has never dwindled. That is why many Bulgarian kings, as if under the command of a supreme law, have gone down to the walls of that ancient city, liberally spilling Bulgarian blood for to unlock its gates, and in this manner give air to the inner lands, which without Salonica ever suffocated”¹⁶. Salonica of the Levant, the largest port on the northern Aegean coast, which for ages has been for the Bulgarians one of the main centers of their economic activity. Salonica the sacred, a city-become-symbol of the Bulgarian language, spirit and culture, thanks to the saintly brothers Cyril and Methodius. But also Salonica the cosmopolitan, the metropolis, “the second capital” of the empire, in which different religious, ethnic and national groups have cohabitated ages on end. Salonica the Balkan, as well, that has left a deep mark in Balkan and Bulgarian cultural and historic memory. Bulgarians, too, have marked that cosmopolitan city. For many Bulgarians Salonica has been a place that is also a model, to which the Bulgarian population of the hinterland has aspired historically, called by Kuzman Shapkarev “the beacon for generations of Bulgarians in Macedonia”¹⁷.

“Simvasilevusa” turns out to be “past's capital city” in quite a number of individual and family biographies, in the recollections and personal histories of many Bulgarians and Bulgarian families, in one way or another connected with Salonica, as if by a covenant. Their stories are published and unpublished, written and unwritten, known and unknown, old and new, interesting and more interesting. Some of these stories have been published and scattered about in libraries, in memoirs and travelogues and the periodic press, like those of Krastyo Velyanov,

¹⁶ К. Велянов, Градът на Кирила и Методия като просветно огнище на македонските българи, В: *Отец Паисий*, год. X, кн. 5, София, 1937, с. 175.

¹⁷ К. Шапкарев, *За възраждането на българщината в Македония. Неиздадени записки и писма*. Съст. И. Тодоров, Н. Жечев. Предговор П. Динев. София, Български писател, 1984, с. 330; <https://www.solunbg.org/bg> - 15.06.2019.

Vassil Uzunov, Mihail Doumbalakov or Pater Zavoev, and many others; or they abound in collections, like the well-known “Makedoniya” (published 1931) and “Solun” (1934), etc. Other stories lie scattered in archives, state or private, like the story of Dimitar Tapkov. And there are the stories yet untold. They are the stories of teachers and students in the Salonica Boys’ Gymnasium, of the Girls’ Gymnasium, of the Commercial Gymnasium, of the several Bulgarian primary schools there, of artisans and merchants, of economic migrants and revolutionaries, politicians and journalists, philanthropists and patriots, adventurers and travellers. The stories of their predecessors, contemporaries and descendants. Stories of Bulgarians that were born in Salonica, or lived in Salonica, or just happened to go there following their roads; stories of foreigners, in some way connected to the Bulgarians of Salonica. Gathered together, their voices mesh and mix, till at a moment one almost hears the real hubbub, like in the end of the 19th and then beginning of the 20th c., in which Bulgarian speech is clearly heard. For all that, Salonica is that kind of place for many a Bulgarian.

Salonica! It was then a city of a hundred and fifty thousand people, with a multitude of mosques, with their slim white minarets towering over. The Jews were proud of their beautiful synagogues. And all Christian denominations had their own churches. (...) Coming to Salonica, the second capital of Turkey, from his far-away hamlet or some village called town, a Bulgarian would see a lot to amaze him. He could go back with a widened view and plenty of cultural gains. (...) At that time in Macedonia, and even in Bulgaria, there was no place that had a theatre, opera, actors and singers, *salons* in the European sense. Salonica had them all¹⁸.

That is how Vassil Uzunov (1873-1948) wrote about Salonica of 1886 in his memoirs, published in 1931 in Sofia. Uzunov is a Bulgarian writer, educator and *volunteer* (in the Balkan War of 1912) from Macedonia, born in Gorna Djumaya, then in the Ottoman Empire. After the Treaty of Berlin, when his hometown was left in the Ottoman Empire, his family moved to the free Bulgarian Principality. Uzunov first went to school in Samokov, then in 1897 finished the first class of Classical studies in the Boys’ Gymnasium of Salonica. All his life he remained attached to Macedonia and a large part of his fiction, often with autobiographical elements, depicts the life and struggles of Macedonian Bulgarians. Here we have a Bulgarian man for whom Salonica is important biographically.

¹⁸ В. Узунов, *Некога в Македонија (1886 г. – 1912 г.)*. София, Македонски научен институт, 1931, с. 49-51.

Trade here maybe equaled trade in all Macedonian towns put together. Steamers sailed in from all ends of the world to unload merchandise and load raw materials. Countless warehouses, bursting with goods, attracted wholesalers from all over Macedonia and even Albania. Ships from all nations visited Port Salonica. All European and Asiatic languages were spoken here. All that created an uncommon variety, fit to satiate the most capricious curiosity¹⁹.

A similar picture of Salonica at the end of the 19th century is painted by Mihail Doumbalakov (1882-1859), who also wrote his memoirs in the 1930s:

At that time Salonica was a vibrant commercial center. Through the port passed a multitude of steamships of Italian, English, French and other companies, which brought some vivacity to the city²⁰.

Doumbalakov was a Bulgarian journalist and activist of the Supreme Committee of Macedonia and Edirne (SCME), who participated in the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie uprisal of 1903. He was born in the village of Suho in the Lagadin plain, at that time in the Ottoman Empire. His brothers were the revolutionaries from SCME Dimitar Doumbalakov and Trendafil Doumbalakov. In the 1890s, following a series of tragic happenings, the Doumbalakov family moved to Salonica. There he went to school, finishing the third form of the Boys' Gymnasium. Mihail Doumbalakov remained a rebel throughout his life, an eternal oppositionist and even a dissident, with his eye constantly on Macedonia.

Actually, it is hard to speak of Bulgarians in Salonica until the mid-19th c. Despite the fact that a Bulgarian printing house functioned there, the immigrants quickly merged with the local Greek community²¹. A witness to that is Krastyo Velyanov (1895-1954), another Macedonian Bulgarian, who wrote emotionally on "the strong life-supporting connection between the big port and the hinterland" in an article in 1937, and continued:

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, с. 51.

²⁰ М. Думбалаков, *През пламъците на живота и революцията*, Том 1. София, 1933 г., с. 11-12.

²¹ Ю. Константинова, „Солун и българите – между емоциите и прагматизма“ – В: М. Младенова, В. Гешев (съст.), *Културно-историческо и езиково наследство на „съседна“ България*, София, Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2013, с. 215.

So, that first-class Byzantine fortress was ardently guarded against the onslaughts of the Bulgarians. But when it fell under Turkish domination together with the whole Balkan Peninsula, its gates opened and the Bulgarians began to visit it frequently in growing numbers, and even to settle in it. Still, Salonica remained a commercial and cultural Greek place, in which the Bulgarian settlers often perished nationally, swallowed by the adroit assimilatory policy of Grecification²².

Velyanov too is a journalist, writer and revolutionary, and an activist of the SCME, and a dissident in later times. He was born in the town of Kroushevo, then in the Ottoman Empire. In the beginning of the 20th century, he graduated from the Commercial Gymnasium, another place emblematic for Salonica Bulgarians.

As to the Bulgarians in Salonica, in the second half of the 19th century the situation gradually changed. In his memoirs, which begin about the time of the Unification of the Principality of Bulgaria with East Roumelia (1885), Vassil Uzunov tells:

At that time Bulgarian speech was seldom heard in Salonica. But only four years later Bulgarian speech resounded everywhere in streets and public places. Recruits from Pomak villages in the vicinity of Salonica were being brought in to the city's garrison. Of a Friday, which was then the Turkish week holiday, many soldiers, and even officers on leave, spoke Bulgarian²³.

At that time Bulgarian would be heard not only from the soldiers, recruited from the hinterland. In the second half of the 19th century, in the decades preceding the foundation of the Bulgarian state, an increasing number of Bulgarians gradually settled in the city. They would be artisans, builders, tailors, milkmen and coppersmiths, hailing from the smaller towns of West Macedonia like Debar, Kukush, Kroushevo, Prilep, Ressen, and also from Ohrid. In 1868 that aggregation entailed another memorable event, which was to become a milestone in the process of national awareness: representative of the Bulgarian artisan guilds established the Salonica Bulgarian Congregation. Soon afterwards a primary school was opened, while one of the local newspapers started to print a Bulgarian version²⁴. The marked change, which became even more felt after the establishment of the Bulgarian state, was registered in the memoirs of Uzunov:

²² Велянов, Градът на Кирила и Методия, с. 175.

²³ Узунов, Некога в Македония, с. 52.

²⁴ Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 215.

Lately, a wave of Bulgarian newcomers hit the city: artisans and merchants from Gevgeli, Doyran, Kukush and many other places. The Kukushans had their own quarter. The Greeks ingratiated themselves whenever the Turks reassured them. They believed more in the strength of blooming Bulgaria, rather than in feeble Greece, ailing under several diseases²⁵.

Thus emerged a new layer of Bulgarian merchants and entrepreneurs, with roots in the smaller towns of West Macedonia. Naturally, people from that group went into economic competition with the Greeks. That significant circumstance entailed another: people from that particular group were the most active supporters of the Bulgarian national idea in Salonica²⁶. Without that cause-and-effect chain even the lengthy development of national consciousness would have hardly been possible. Without being detailed or concrete, Krastyo Velyanov seems to be hinting at such changes once in one place of his writings, with the pathos characteristic of him:

But between inner Macedonia, where Bulgarian self-awareness was already heightened, and Salonica itself, there started a series of floods and ebbs, slow and weak at first, but gradually getting stronger and more profuse, which prepared the fall of the Byzantine fortress under the Bulgarian spirit. The Bulgarians, who would strive to be in Salonica with relentless insistence, no longer sank in the sea of Greeks as happened before, when they did not have a church, or school, or Congregation to unite and protect them²⁷.

The next milestone of the self-awareness of the Bulgarian community in Salonica was a push that, though it came from outside, had the strongest effect. The establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 entailed the official recognition of the Bulgarian nation in the Ottoman Empire. Upon the occasion, Velyanov wrote:

After the establishment of the Exarchate (28 February 1870), the spiritual upsurge of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, as well as all over Bulgaria, became even stronger. Schools and churches throughout the land were no longer in the care of local and occasional initiatives, but by the Exarchate itself. In all of Macedonia there sprung up reading houses, brotherhoods and societies with the same goal:

²⁵ Узунов, *Некога в Македония*, с. 52.

²⁶ Константинова, *Солун и българите*, с. 217.

²⁷ Велянов, *Градът на Кирила и Методия*, с. 175.

education and cultural advancement! The poorer and weaker Bulgarian religious and educational congregations were happily supported by it by wealthy patriots, be it by richer congregations, in order to open a school or build a church in their locality²⁸.

The establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate entailed also some negatives for the Bulgarian idea in Salonica, especially after the schism imposed by the Universal Patriarchate, or it estranged many influential Bulgarian Salonicans²⁹. Probably that is what Velyanov was hinting at, when he wrote that “the fever of the struggle, which Macedonian Bulgarians caught too over the unrest around the spiritual independence, after the establishment of the Exarchate (...) turned into a fever for education and cultural creation”³⁰. But as Yura Konstantinova says, for the Bulgarians the turning point came with then establishment of the Bulgarian state and the decision of the Exarchate to open a Bulgarian gymnasium in Salonica³¹.

The idea of having a Bulgarian Boys’ and Girls’ gymnasiums in Salonica did not come up in a logical manner. It did not appear as an outcome of the natural development of the middle schools in the city.

The first to be praised for helping in that endeavor, which played a key role in the rapid cultural development of Bulgarians in all of Macedonia, is our famous folklorist and teacher Kuzman Shapkarev, a Bulgarian from Ohrid.

Apparently, at the time Shapkarev was the only person who understood the huge importance of the first city of Macedonia for Macedonian Bulgarians³².

Initially, Exarch Yosif was against the idea that a Bulgarian school of that quality should be located exactly in Salonica, arguing that there were too many problems with Bulgarian schooling in the city, as well as with Bulgariansim there in general. Subsequently, the effort of Kuzman Shapkarev was successful: he managed to promote the idea that the first Bulgarian gymnasium in the Ottoman Empire should in fact be in Salonica. His arguments were predominantly geographical and political. More importantly, his judgment was proved right by with the passage of time. For the next school year, 1881/1882, the future teachers personally went around Macedonia and invited students. So that is the story of the opening of the St St Cyril and Methodius Bulgarian Boys’ Gymnasium of Salonica, which

²⁸ *Ibid.*, с. 173.

²⁹ Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 216.

³⁰ Велянов, Градът на Кирила и Методия, с. 173.

³¹ Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 217.

³² Велянов, Градът на Кирила и Методия, с. 172.

was to become legendary. At the same time the Holy Evangel Girls' Gymnasium was opened. And as most of the students did not come from Salonica, Boarding Houses were established also³³.

Actually, Salonica was not a Turkish, but a European city, with almost every nationality having a school there. It was not without a purpose that our gymnasium was opened here. For us students the city itself was an extra school³⁴.

Probably there are no alumni of those gymnasiums that would not pay homage to them in their memoirs. These high schools marked another step forward of the Bulgarian consciousness in that city. Mihail Doumbalakov, himself an alumnus, remembers:

There were also numerous foreign schools and boarding schools, as well as various centers for religious and political propaganda in Macedonia. Here, too, was the historical Bulgarian gymnasium of Salonica, which sent to Bulgaria numerous public figures, and to Macedonia, many makers of its Renaissance. (...) After finishing primary and middle school, I too had to enter the first grade of that gymnasium³⁵.

The St St Cyril and Methodius Bulgarian Boys' Gymnasium of Salonica very soon became a focal point, attracting both hopes for the future (in the direct and indirect sense) and serious resources. That was the foundation of the excellent schooling in the humanities and sciences, the amply furnished labs, and even the meteorological station.

A strong factor in that case was also the Bulgarian gymnasium, excellently furnished, with its handpicked and highly qualified staff and its numerous students, inspired by patriotism and a longing for freedom. We students, filled with national pride, endeavored to keep the Bulgarian name flying wherever we would go. With every noble deed of ours we added some value to the Bulgarian name³⁶.

The statistics are eloquent, albeit rather lapidarian: for the thirty three years of its existence, the St St Cyril and Methodius Bulgarian Boys' Gymnasium of Sa-

³³ Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 218.

³⁴ Узунов, Некога в Македония, с. 50.

³⁵ Думбалаков, През пламъците, Т. I, с. 12.

³⁶ Узунов, Некога в Македония, с. 52.

lonica was finished by 27 classes, totaling 6259 students, representatives of different Bulgarian communities from the European vilayets of the Empire.

Among them we can find representatives of many famous Bulgarian families from Macedonia: the Shapkarevs, Robevs, Stanishevs, Parlichevs, Sprostranovs, Lyapchevs, Hadjimishevs, etc. Among the alumni of the Gymnasium, naturally, dominate the students from the Salonica vilayet (172), followed by the vilayets of Skopje (143) and Bitola (142); however, there were also students from the vilayet of Adrianople (Edirne) (15) and even from Bulgaria (23). Similar is the situation in the Girls' gymnasium, with 222 students from the vilayet of Salonica, 195 from Bitola, 169 from Skopje, 38 from Adrianople (Edirne) and 7 from Bulgaria³⁷.

In his article on the education of Salonica Bulgarians, Vassil Uzunov gives due praise to also other Bulgarian schools in the city, adding:

Later, along these two gymnasiums a third one was founded, viz. the Commercial Gymnasium. Besides, there were kindergartens, primary and three-form middle schools³⁸.

The St St Cyril and Methodius Bulgarian Boys' Gymnasium of Salonica was naturally considered the pride of Bulgarian education in the Ottoman Empire (and it might have been the best of the whole Bulgarian educational system at that time), but it should be noted that besides the three Bulgarian gymnasiums, there were Bulgarian students in foreign establishments also, such as the St Jean Baptiste de la Salle catholic college, the catholic Bulgarian Lazarist seminary in Zeytinlik, as well as the American Agrarian School.

Another circumstance, connected to Bulgarian education in Salonica should be mentioned, namely the fact that after finishing, the alumni of the Bulgarian gymnasiums of Salonica would return to their native places, to become the natural propagators of the ideas tied to the Bulgarian national consciousness, which had been imparted to them in Salonica. Credit for that is due first and foremost to the teachers in these gymnasiums. They were, of course, hired by the Exarchate, which endeavored to send to Macedonia Bulgarians that hailed from that region³⁹. There

³⁷ See Г. Ст. Кандиларов. *Българските гимназии и основни училища в Солун*. София, Македонски научен институт, 1930, с. 104-107, 177-178; Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 219.

³⁸ Велянов, Градът на Кирила и Методия, с. 179.

³⁹ Шапкарев, *За възраждането на българщината в Македония*, с. 298; Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 219.

was the problem with the lack of a unifying strategy to order all these ideas in the same direction, but that was another question.

It is in the spirit of these ideas that Mihail Doumbalakov wrote, when he attempted to revive the troubled public atmosphere of Salonica in the unrestful years of the *sui generis* Balkan *fin du siècle*:

For Salonica Bulgarians it was a gradual awakening. Schools were opened, money was collected for various national enterprises, with the Church struggles still occupying the center stage. (...) But there wasn't even a step distancing the will to resist, cultivated by the Church struggle, from the revolutionary expansion. The empire of the sultans was shaking. (...) Beyond the borders of the empire a young, vivacious principality was thrusting its aggressive fist under the very nose of the senile colossus. (...) The diplomatic departments of Europe were diligently treating the so-called Eastern Question. (...) The interlacing interests of the great European nations kept postponing the date of Macedonian freedom. (...) But one race, half of which was breathing freely on the other side of the Strandja and the Rhodopes, thought differently from those sophisticated gentlemen with features of ice behind their monocles and pince-nez⁴⁰.

In that context, it should not come as a surprise that just a few years after its establishment, the St St Cyril and Methodius Bulgarian Boys' Gymnasium of Salonica became a noted nest of the revolution. It is in that gymnasium that in 1893 the Internal Macedonian - Adrianople Revolutionary Organization (IMARO) was founded, which gradually became the informal center for the rest of the revolutionary societies. Most, if not all, of the founders of IMARO was tied directly to the Boys' Gymnasium: as alumnus (Damyan Gruev and Anton Dimitrov), or employee (Hristo Tatarchev, Ivan Hadjinikolov, Petar Poparsov, Hristo Batandjiev). And such ties were never broken. The leaders and activists of IMARO in subsequent years were all alumni or students of that Gymnasium: Gotse Delchev, Boris Sarafov, Gyorche Petrov, Ivan Mihailov, Todor Alexandrov, etc. The gradual growth of the organization entailed a growth of the donations from Bulgarian merchants of Salonica. Among the supporters were the Hadjimishev brothers, the Shavkulov brothers, Petar Sarafov, and many others⁴¹.

There are indeed serious grounds to speak of general characteristics of the ideological climate in the region, for only three years after the foundation of IM-

⁴⁰ Думбалаков, *През пламъците* Т. I, с. 16.

⁴¹ Константинова, *Солун и българите*, с. 220.

ARO, in 1896 a chapter of the *Unity and Progress* Young Turks committee was founded in Salonica – and in 1908 it is the Young Turks who overthrew the Sultan. The anarchist and socialist ideas that quickly blossomed in Salonica at the time should be noted also, for the Bulgarian input in that quarter was serious. The activities of the so-called *gemidjii* should also be considered here. In April 1903, they made a series of bomb attacks in the city, which had a resounding international response, quite negative for the Bulgarians in the city, despite the idealistic goals of the bombings⁴².

Salonica had become not only an educational, but also a cultural and political center of Macedonian Bulgarians. Beside the schools, there were three Bulgarian churches in the city, Bulgarian newspapers and journals were published, and after the Young Turks coup of 1908 it became also the seat of the Bulgarian constitutional clubs⁴³.

Verily, for many Bulgarians Salonica is that kind of place, Salonica the Levantine, the cosmopolitan, and also the Balkan, the city that has left a deep mark in Bulgarian cultural and historic memory. It is clear that the Bulgarians also left deep tracks in Salonica.

The Bulgarians and Salonica

Such was the troubled atmosphere in Salonica in the decades of turmoil, encompassing that singular Balkan *fin de siècle*, that “end of the century” that stretched out in time so and was in many aspects so dramatic. There are those for whom that was the artistic climate of the late 19th and the early 20th century, dominated by a sophistication sinking in itself, by “escapism” and extreme estheticism, some sort of fatigue from the world, dressed as fashionable despair. For others, those were the years of false calm, the end of the *Belle époque*, the finale of the “beautiful epoch”, categorically fullstopped by World War I, and on the Balkans even earlier, by the Balkan and the Inter-allies wars. However, it was never calm in Salonica.

Sometime then, in the hot summer of 1908, amid the turmoil of the Hürriyet, i.e. the Young Turks revolution, Petar Zavojev (1880-1969), made his first visit to Salonica and wrote about it in his travel notes. Zavojev’s text is remarkable in many ways. Through a rich vocabulary he achieves a truly vivid picture, lined with

⁴² Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 220-221.

⁴³ Велянов, Градът на Кирила и Методия, с. 179.

a natural and, occasionally, rather emotional narrative. When one goes deeper in the remembrances of Zavoev, the image of the city and its inhabitants acquire a stereoscopic look, then imposed upon them start to appear colors, sounds, smells... until the reader catches herself or himself smiling at the live Salonica of olden days that has surrounded her or him. There are few recollections from those times that display such strength. Here is a little piece of Salonica at the beginning of the 20th century:

I was coming to Salonica for the first time. Though late at night, the railway station and the square in front of it were flooded with light and people. The different attires, the black hats and red fezes, the human races and ages were being mixed irregularly to form a multicolored bouquet. On the platform I had noticed many Sofianites, come to meet the train [...].

I was entering a very big and unknown city. My cab rolled down not so wide streets, paved with nice stone blocks. On both sides there stood beautiful houses several stories high, now illuminated in blue by the air gas lamps. The main streets were lively. Coquettish new tram cars were still clattering down the streets. Here and there I saw big coffee houses, lavishly lit up. They were full of people. And they had not enough space to house all the public, so it had to sit at tables right out in the street. Such smiling faces, such joy radiating! Some were at backgammon; others drew on their hookahs, spellbound by their conversations. The cab would pass one street after another, getting deeper into the city. A beauteous mosque here, with a tall, multiringed minaret, a building there with picturesque domes and inscriptions [...].

I had admired other sea waterfronts, popularly celebrated for their beauty. I had spent long nocturnal hours, dreaming and contemplating, at the blue coast of Dalmatia, but, methinks, that coastline of Salonica is matchless [...].

Time didn't suffice for being surprised. Everything could happen here...⁴⁴

Zavoev was a Bulgarian journalist, writer and researcher, born in Shtip, then in the Ottoman Empire. But he was also an adventurer, connected with the activity of Salonica revolutionary organizations, and a member of the militia of Macedonia and Adrianople during the wars. He had been a special envoy, an editor of newspapers and journals, a military courier, etc.; his were numerous short stories,

⁴⁴ П. Завоев, *Писма от Македонија. 1908-1916. (Пътни бележки, наблюдения и впечатления)*. София, 1916, с. 70-72.

articles, feuilletons, memoirs, articles and reviews. But his memoirs, entitled *Letters from Macedonia. 1908-1916. (Travel notes, observations and impressions)*, published in Sofia in 1916, is in this case his most relevant work.

In quiet days Salonica has about 175 thousand inhabitants. Now, that figure has moved up to 200 thousand. Freedom is a harlot who flatters and attracts. The attracted ones are many: sages who try the strength of their wisdom, and youths for whom turmoil and revolution is wine, and women looking for adventures, and Europeans, who love the mystique of the East as if it were fiction. Salonica is a legend⁴⁵.

True enough: according to statistical data, in the period 1885-1905, due to intensive urbanization processes of ever-growing pace, in twenty years, Salonica increased its population by 50 percent. In 1885 the city had 85,000 inhabitants, in 1900 – 115,000, and in 1905 – 135,000⁴⁶. Probably the trend lasted till the wars.

That is the period during which the influx of Bulgarians was probably the strongest. While in the city, Petar Zavojev undertook to produce a *sui generis* ethnic census of the citizens of Salonica, which he later included in his *Letters from Macedonia*. It merits a quote not only because it corroborates in a sense the statistical data, but, as mentioned, because of the way he fleshes out the recollection. Of course, what we get is not simply Salonica at the beginning of the 20th century, but his personal non-recoverable Salonica, the Salonica of Petar Zavojev:

Of the city's population 90 thousands are Jews, 60 thousands are Turks, and there are 10,000 Greeks, 8,000 Bulgarians, and the rest 7,000 are human hodge-podge, without beginning or end, a black mob that has no color of its own, no faith, no nationality, no responsibility. A hiding man tells not his name; a man after profit assumes two. Salonica is the best place to hide and to profit. That muddy mob 7 thousand strong, which has now grown to 30 thousand, is the natural ornament of Salonica. Here is the Englishman with his shaven moustache and cold-bloodedness. Here is the German with his white helmet, feeling at home. Here is the anarchist from Barcelona, the French apache, the Russian hooligan, Bay Ganyo, Gazda Djuro, the Cretan brigand. Here too are the black representative of Africa, the beggar from Aleppo with his naked, needle-pierced body, the Levantine, the mystic from Baghdad and Syria, the dervish from Damascus the Holy: all a

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, c. 82.

⁴⁶ Ю. Константинова, Заселване на българи в Солун в края на XIX и началото на XX век, *Балкани*, 2017/6, 1, с. 49.

rolling variety. It enchants and intimidates. It enchants, as it is loud in color and sound; it intimidates, as it is boundless and undefined⁴⁷.

The Bulgarian statistics show that at that time, shortly before the Balkan Wars, Bulgarians in Salonica numbered around 10,000, which is slightly more than 8 percent of the whole population. In other words, even in boom periods for the Bulgarian component, it always remains smaller than the Jewish, Turkish and Greek components.

In that period, however, the Bulgarian element dominated the hinterland of the city, and it is on that fact that the Bulgarian pretense for Salonica was based during the Balkan Wars. In the words of Yura Konstantinova, "Bulgaria has a pretense for Salonica not because she believed that Salonica was a Bulgarian city, but that it was the capital of Macedonia, and Macedonia was a fundamental part of the Bulgarian national program"⁴⁸.

As a matter of fact, the really important problems of identity, be it personal or even communal or national, do not lie beneath numbers. Numbers, of course, are important, but they are not everything, because each event embodies an essential existential moment, in which the road of history intersects with individual action. At that moment the individual's experience forms her or his judgment, her or his approach, her or his interpretation, as well, naturally, the consequences for the future. People make decisions and realize their life amid a multitude of contexts. Their behavior is based on more than one or two planes, chosen among the "usual suspects", such as race, sex, class, economic interest, religious or ethnic belonging, etc. The essence of that cross point, of that singular point of balance, as well as any essence, is beyond numbers. Essentially, the course of history is incessantly crossing individual acts in order to create meaning. It is just that cross point between the individual act and the course of history, which could even be the embodiment of meaning for the individual – hence for the community – insofar as it transcends the boundaries of the human being as such, insofar as it is a road to infinity. That is why essence precedes numbers. For the discontinuous, limited, or simply mortal human being will probably ever seek a road to continuity.

In the beginning of his memoirs, which he wrote in his ripe old age, and which have become a valuable part of the archive of his heirs, Dimitar Draganov Tapkov, born in 1907 in Bitola, quoted Alexander Herzen: "In order to write your memoirs you do not have to be a great man, or an adventurer who has survived a

⁴⁷ Константинова, Заселване на българи в Солун, с. 82-84.

⁴⁸ Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 227.

lot, or a famous artist or statesman. It is enough to just be a man who has something to relate, and who can and wants to do it. The life of an ordinary man can also be of interest, not in relation to that person, but in relation to the country and the epoch in which that person has lived.” After which Tapkov goes far back in his childhood and starts his story:

My earliest recollections go back to the time around 1911, when I was about four or five [...].

We lived in Salonica, where my father was a teacher in the Bulgarian Girls' Gymnasium [...].

I remember our house well. It was located in the higher, hygienic part of the amphiteatrical city, in a Turkish neighborhood. Here, as everywhere in mixed townships, the Turks occupied the high ground quarters. The house was standing right in the street and had two floors and an iron balcony. From the upper floor there was a magnificent view to the sea. Below us rolled out the colorful quarter million city, reaching the bay to join the bluish horizon far away, while Olympus, almost touching the clouds, loomed above the water mirror [...].

The yard was separated from the garden by an iron rod fence standing on a foundation of stone and buttressed by rectangular brick columns. (...) While playing there I could hear the muezzin, who every day at around four or five o'clock called the believers to prayer from the minaret of the mosque across the street, simultaneously announcing to me and my granny that it was time for my afternoon bite [...].

Our street, like most others at the time, was covered by large round cobblestones. I don't recall its name. Just a few houses away on the other side of the street was the mosque I already mentioned. In front of it there was a fountain, and I often amused myself by watching through the window the Turks take off their shoes to wash their feet before they entered to pray. In connection to that mosque I remember a childish episode, which made me lose my fear of the Turks. It was about noon on a summer day, when the hot hours start and people retire to rest. At that time of day the street was getting deserted. I was coming home from play. Right in front of the mosque I felt an urge to urinate. For such occasions, in more obscure corners there were piles of quicklime. Such were the public *pissoirs* in Turkey. But there was no such place nearby. I looked around impatiently. Not a living soul was to be seen, so I bravely leaned on the fountain. I was just finish-

ing the operation, when around the corner appeared an elderly Turk wearing a turban, blue harem pants and a wide white sash. In front of him he was carrying a basket of grapes. To my horror he veered and went right towards me. I was petrified, my legs gave and in my fright I could not even make myself decent. No matter how small I was, I must have been aware that one should not piss on a mosque, especially in front of a Turk.

He came even with me and stopped. With his eye he followed the narrow, long crooked trail, going from the wall of the mosque all the way to the middle of the street. Then he grinned, and uttered a prolonged "*Mashallah!*" spitting repeatedly as old grannies would, against an evil eye. He took a large bunch of grapes out of his basket and handed it to me, and went his way, repeating his *mashallah*. I stood there for a long time, grapes in hand, staring stupidly after him⁴⁹.

Finally, the Inter-allies war put an end to Bulgarian hopes of including Salonica in the Bulgarian state. Many Bulgarians, soldiers and civilians, were killed in the clashes between the Bulgarian and Greek army units in Salonica in July 1913. Many Bulgarian prisoners died, loaded on the ships bound for the island of Trikeri. Many found their death on the island itself. Also many were those that managed to survive, but were forced to leave town and emigrate to Bulgaria. According to Greek statistics, in the years between the two world wars only around 1,500 Bulgarians lived in Salonica; there is no information for some organization or institution of theirs⁵⁰.

"That all-round progress went on until the middle of 1913, when... But let's not repeat what happened then!"⁵¹ – exclaims Krastyo Velyanov in the end of his recollections of Salonica. "Who would have thought, that in just a few years Greece would become victor at the expense of the body of Bulgaria, that Salonica will be Greek!"⁵² – exclaims in his turn Vassil Uzunov in the end of his Salonica recollections. Even more severe, direct, and hurt sounds Mihail Doumbalakov: "The wisdom, foresight and flair of Salonicans were met by the dull and blind infirmity of the state and the public in Sofia, where every voice of reason and fore-

⁴⁹ Личен архив Тъпкови и Рая Заимова: <https://www.solunbg.org/bg/solun-i-balgarite/pamet/spomeni/206-тарков-dimitar-iz-detskite-mi-godini.html> - 15.06.2019.

⁵⁰ Константинова, Солун и българите, с. 230-231.

⁵¹ Велянов, Градът на Кирила и Методия, с. 179.

⁵² Узунов, *Некога в Македония*, с. 53.

warning was taxed as treason, while the criminal lunacy of the responsible Bulgarian statesmen, which brought about the catastrophe, remained unpunished”⁵³.

In the words of Yura Konstantinova, in the period between the world wars, a romantic halo around Salonica was gradually constructed in Bulgaria – and there is nothing strange about that. Behind that image of Salonica stood predominantly the Bulgarians who had left their birthplaces in Macedonia to find shelter within the boundaries of Bulgaria. The life story of many of them was connected to the Bulgarian gymnasiums of Salonica, others in their turn were pupils of these alumni of the gymnasiums, yet others had been members of the IMARO⁵⁴ – and there were those who had forgotten or were forgotten, which in this case amounts to the same. Naturally, each death obliterates an enormous body of remembrances. But some remain. History is potentially deathless, at least written history, at least within the scope of culture with a capital “C”, i.e. civilization.

Salonica! What sweet and wonderful memories awakens this name in me! At times it feels as if my four school years there were nothing but a dream dreamt long ago. Now and then something even whispers to me that I was never a student in the gymnasium of Salonica named after the saints Cyril and Methodius, that it never existed, that some radiant wish just chanced to cross my mind, to light it up for a flicker and let my soul cling to something sweet amid bitter trials. Such sorrow eats me at times that this past is never to return, for eternity looms between it and me⁵⁵.

History

Objectively spoken, memory is a given, and history is a collection of chance happenings. Memory is simultaneously personal and shared, and history *per definitionem* is exclusively collective, i.e. always shared. However, all said and done, it would be best to have memory and history walk the way to the past hand in hand.

It is said that memory dictates, and history writes it down. Sometimes, pride argues with memory, and usually memory gives in, but that is another problem. Memory and history can be distinguished not so much as different kinds of knowledge of the past, but rather as different attitudes towards that knowledge. The boundary between them, however, remains unclear. Both proceed to penetrate the past. Probably memory depicts what we have lost in the past, while histo-

⁵³ Думбалаков, *През пламъците*, Т. II, с. 262.

⁵⁴ Константинова, *Солун и българите*, с. 231.

⁵⁵ Узунов, *Некога в Македония*, с. 49.

ry makes the past part of us, and us – part of it. In other words, in order to be what we are, we must become part of what we have lost: to find ourselves, we must lose ourselves. And vv.

History is at once more and less than the past that historians study. It is a lesser thing, for there is no narrative that could recover the past in its wholeness, which is practically infinite. It would take you all your whole life to write up all your life. The past is simply not one history, but an infinite string of histories. Simultaneously, history is also more than the past, as it is its interpretation. *A propos*: every interpretation is subjective by definition.

Preoccupied by history, we have become so familiar with the interpretation that history is, that we perceive past events, along with all dates and names, as a given, i.e. as attributes of the past itself. Only that they are not *its* attributes, for it is us that have put them there in the process of interpreting that past. "Facts about the past are timeless and discontinuous unless woven together in stories" ...⁵⁶ – by ourselves. And these stories are exactly *the* narrative – with a capital "N". History, after all, is also a narrative, no less than literature is. The past becomes the past only after it has passed. History becomes History only after it has become a story.

Microhistory

It looks like historians have always thought that the reason for their undertaking is to save the deeds of humankind from the horror of human forgetfulness, by keeping the "wolf of insignificance" away from the fold of human culture (with capital "C", i.e. civilization). With that goal on their flag, historians focus *the* historic Narrative on the great events and deeds of mortals, along with the chief participants in them and their "big" names. Inevitably, the study of universal history leaves aside individual small events and tribulations, along with their innumerable insignificant participants and their "small" names. Stories are sacrificed to History. Indeed, for History to have sense, it should get into abstraction and generalization. After all, to remember means to forget. And vv.

That is the reason why historic books most often tell of peoples, nations, unions, forces, interests, overflow with facts and events, but present very few leading actors. And if there are such, in most cases they are personifications *sui generis* of these same peoples, nations, unions, etc. Historic books as such seldom speak of individual human beings. It is not a question here of biographies and lives, they

⁵⁶ Lowenthal, *The Past*, p. 353.

are a separate genre, apart from history – apart from both macro history, or History, but also from microhistory, which, in its turn, is another story. “The ethical and political price of this desertification of the past is very high”, writes the Italian historian Sabina Loriga in a study of microhistory, and in addition just marks one, but probably the most worrying of History’s characteristics she perceives as most dangerous: “the danger of relativism, which corrodes the principle of individual responsibility, is not an exclusive feature of so-called postmodern historiography, but is also innate in an impersonal reading of history which describes reality through anonymous relationships of power”⁵⁷. In a certain sense, those that have really been excluded from the attention of History, are not simply and only the partly obliterated actors, which to History appear insignificant, but also most of us – the readers of that History. And many of us are bearers of no end of small histories.

It was mentioned above that memory often turns big History into personal recollections and stories, but, on the other hand, these personal recollections and stories indeed function as building blocks for History. As early as 1935, Berthold Brecht asked his famous question: “Who built Seven-gate Thebes?”. In the 1970s, as if an echo, Carlo Ginsburg carried on the same question, and gave voice to an Italian miller of the 16th century. It is true that Menocchio, though an ordinary miller, was an extraordinary individual and a thorn in the side of the Inquisition with his notions. A bit later, Giovanni Levi centered on a banal place, a small Italian village of the 17th century, with its “small habitual stories”, and an especially infuriated exorcist priest, and brought in to speak a multitude of voices, forgotten by History. Since then there is ever growing talk about microhistory. Increasingly often it is being connected with a more aggressive and at the same time more intuitive approach to taking cognizance of the information of the past. That approach questions the apparent homogeneity of the world that we know the way that we know it, thanks to the historical narrative; it recalculates the balance between histories and History, between personal fates and the being of social structures; it delves deep in the cracks of normative frameworks, searching for a social context, far from the image of a compact and coherent whole⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ S. Loriga, “The Role of the Individual in History Biographical and Historical Writing in the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Century”, In: Hans Renders, Binne de Haan (ed.) *Theoretical Discussions of Biography Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing. Revised and Augmented Edition*. Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2014, p. 76-77.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75-94.

The microhistorical approach narrows the scope and increases the scale, without neglecting even small facts, and deepens research, in order to connect data, found in all kinds of source, including so-called ego-documents. The novelty here is not so much the maximalist attitude towards reconstructing past events, as the goal to produce a narrative, as full as possible, three dimensional and analytical, in which, along with abstract forces, real human beings form the events. The sense of all that is to feel and become cognizant, albeit subjectively, of the multifarious contexts among which people make decisions and realize their lives; to understand, as said above, that behavior is founded on more than one or two planes, chosen from the "usual suspects" of race, sex, class, economic interests, religious or ethnic belonging. Because absolutely every event embodies an essential existential moment, in which the road of history intersects with the individual action. At that moment the individual's experience forms her or his judgment, her or his interpretation and her or his "here and now" approach, together with all the consequences that entails in the future.

All this considered, the sense of microhistory should not be looked for so much in the "small histories", as in the possibility of influencing History through them. Which means influencing historiography in general, putting it in a new perspective, and possibly even changing it. A focus on "small histories", on the "exclusively particular" or the "particularly exclusive" effects of actions and events could give History a new meaning, and why not change its course. In this case the resolution of small conundrums in human life is understood as a means to study culture in general. No matter how unique or how banal a life of a human being, the value of studying it lies in interpreting it as an allegory of culture as a whole⁵⁹. Here we have another in the row of analogies between the individual and society. Sometimes, one bunch of grapes given to one child in one street may bear as much knowledge as the history of several wars.

Still, the individual cannot fully explain the group, the community or the institution, as well as conversely, the group, community and the institution cannot explain the individual. There is always a discrepancy and that is inescapable. We have two sets here that can never be simply reduced to one. Therefore, to understand the whole, we should understand the parts, and to understand the parts we should understand the whole.

⁵⁹ See for a detailed review J. Lepore. *Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography*, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 88, N 1 (Jun., 2001), p. 129-144.

It is from this viewpoint, so distant from the traditional angle of political history, that the individual finds her or his way back⁶⁰. In the remembrance the forgotten one appears, the lost one is found, the dead one is alive. If we could hear them, probably many voices would have what to say, and history would have sounded differently. Maybe it could even acquire a new meaning. Not only through the voices of Vassil Uzunov, Krastyo Velyanov, and Mihail Doumbalakov, or Petar Zavoev, or Dimitar Tapkov... But also the voices of all those who are being forgotten and ignored by history with its capital “H”.

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⁶⁰ Loriga, *The Role of the Individual*, p. 87.

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Malamir Spasov

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
malamir_spasova@balkanstudies.bg*

URBAN SPACE IN THE GREEK POETRY OF THE 1920S
(BASED ON EXAMPLES FROM CAESAR EMMANOUIL'S WORKS)

Fotiny Christakoudy–Konstantinidou

Abstract: *Kostas Ouranis (1890-1953), Angelos Dhoxas (1900-1985), Orestis Laskos (1907-1992), Caesar Emanouil (1902-1970), Alexandros Baras (1906-1990), Nikos Kavvadias (1910-1975) are among the artists who in the turbulence of the interwar years discover the fascination of the urban space and the magic of the voyage. French literature had been familiar with the image of the modern city from the time of Baudelaire's poems (The Swan, Spleen), but Greek poetry first discovered it only via the generation of the symbolists of the 1920s. The theme of the city was entirely absent from the lyric poetry of the poetic generation of the 1890s. "The Disharmonic Flute" (1929) by the poet Caesar Emmanuel is among the lyrical collections that have become the quintessence of this new Athenian urban life. In its verses vibrate the unending noise of the cabaret and of the performance together with a strong sense of hedonistic delight.*

Keywords: *Greek Symbolism, 1920s poetic generation, urban space, Caesar Emmanuel*

Having arisen as a response against the excessive „academicism“ of realism and naturalism, symbolism sought and found its major esthetic and theoretical weapons in irrationalism, subjectivism, psychologism, aestheticism, which brought it closer to the European and, above all, German Romanticism¹ that preceded it. The spread of symbolism in almost all European states and particularly its Russian and German versions (in Germany it was intertwined with the German Neo-Romanticism (Neuroromantik)) turned it

¹ Γ. Βελουδης, Ο ποιητής Κ. Χατζόπουλος, Στο: Τα ποιήματα. Αθήνα, Ιδρυμα Κώστα και Ελένης Ουράνη, 1992, σ. 26.

into an avalanche that swept along all national European literatures². It affected mostly poetic production and paved the way for the new trends in European modernism (futurism, Dadaism, surrealism, etc.), which in turn allowed symbolism to continue in existence at least until World War II, entwined with them via the term “neo-symbolism”³. In general, a characteristic feature of symbolism, both in the literatures where it originated and in the literatures where it was so successfully adopted, was that it involved a long period of radiation.

In Greece, symbolism opened up wide vistas for modernist poetic experiments in the 1890s and became a primary subject of discussions in the years 1898-1899, mainly in the short-lived *Techni* magazine⁴. The last quarter of the 19th century is associated with the first wave of propagation of symbolism in Greek literature, when parallel with K. Palamas (1859-1943)⁵ and C. Cavafy (1863-1933) first symbolist works were also published by the poets K. Hadzopoulos (1868-1920)⁶,

² Βελούδης, Ο ποιητής Κ. Χατζόπουλος, σ. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴ Π. Βουτουρής, Λογοτεχνικές αναζητήσεις, Στο: Χ. Χατζηιωσήφ (επ.), *Ιστορία της Ελλάδος*, Αθήνα, Βιβλιόραμα, 2000, σ. 305.

⁵ K. Palamas (1859-1943) is a national literary icon, a central figure in the Greek literary life, particularly of the Greek literary and poetic generation of the 1880s. He was one of the co-founders of what came to be known as New Athenian School. Poet, writer, playwright, historian and critic of literature with significant contribution to the evolution and renewal of modern Greek poetry, Palamas is regarded as one of the most significant Greek authors of the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century.

⁶ Konstantinos Hadzopoulos (1868-1920) was born in Agrinio (Epirus). He is the principal representative of the first symbolist generation of the 1890s, regarded as its ideologist due to a series of theoretical articles, including the well-known *The Psychology of Symbolism* (1920). See Χατζόπουλος, Κ. Κριτικά κείμενα (επιμ. Κρίστα Ανεμούδη-Αρζόγλου). Αθήνα, Νεοελληνική βιβλιοθήκη Ιδρύματος Κώστας και Ελένης Ουράνη, 1996, σ. 124-137. Hadzopoulos was a poet, fiction writer and essayist, translator and editor of the short-lived avant-garde magazine *Techni* („Η Τέχνη“) (1897-1899) that actively defended Demotic language on its pages. Educated in Germany, he has exerted significant influence on contemporary Greek poetry with his “Nordic Symbolism”. His literary criticism, lyric poetry, short stories and symbolist novel *Autumn* have secured an important position for him in modern Greek literature.

I. Gryparis (1872-1942)⁷, L. Porfyra (1879-1932)⁸, etc., better known as “the 1890s poetic generation”⁹. Some critics, such as P. Voutouris, distinguish the first symbolist trend of the 1890s from the revival and enrichment of the symbolist toolkit initiated after 1910 with the poets Romos Filyras (1888-1942), (*Roses in the Foam*, 1910) and Kostas Ouranis (1880-1953), (*Spleen*, 1911)¹⁰. This “neo-symbolist” (“neo-romantic” or “meta-symbolist”) trend was joined, by virtue of their works, by most of the poets of the 1920s generation: N. Lapathiotis (1888- 1944), K. Karyotakis (1896-1928), T. Agras (1899-1944), M. Papanikolaou (1900-1943), Maria Polydouri (1902-1930), etc.

In his voluminous work dedicated to Greek poetry from Homer to Seferis, the insightful researcher of Greek poetry C. Trypanis refers to four rather than two consecutive waves in which symbolism pervaded Greek literature¹¹: the first wave spanned the period between 1892 and 1905, its representatives being the poets Konstaninos Hadzopoulos, Ioannis Gryparis, Lorentzos Mavilis (1860-1912)¹², Miltiadis Malakasis (1869-1943)¹³, Lambros Porfyra, Apostolos Mela-

⁷ Ioannis Gryparis (1872-1942) was born in Sifnos. His early works are indicative of Parnassianist influence, mostly by Theophile Gautier and Heredia. His Parnassianist period includes a set of impeccable sonnets: the fifteen-syllable *Scarabs* and the eleven-syllable *Terracottae* published in a single book in 1919 („Σκαραβαίοι και Τερακότες“). Later on Gryparis turned to symbolism and this is particularly evident in *Intermedia* („Ιντερμέδια“) (1899-1901), where verses become more free and musical, and images more impressively suggestive. He also used legends based on the folklore tradition and medieval works.

⁸ Lambros Porfyra (1879-1932) is the main representative of the first generation of symbolists of the 1890s. His poetry books clearly reflect the lyricism of his poetic style even in their titles: *Shadows* („Σκιές“) (1920) and *Lyrical Voices* („Μουσικές φωνές“) (1934).

⁹ Βουτουρή, *Λογοτεχνικές αναζητήσεις*, σ. 305.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Κ. Α. Τρυπάνης, *Ελληνική ποίηση. Αθήνα, Εστία*, 1988, σ. 375.

¹² Lorentzos Mavilis (1860-1912) was born in Ithaca and is regarded as the most adroit sonnet author in Greek literature (also well-known as a great chess player). His masterpieces include *Oblivion*, *Kallipatira*, *Dedication*, etc. He died during the Balkan Wars. In 1911, while advocating the rights of the Demotic language, he uttered the memorable words: “There is no vulgar language, but here are vulgar people, and there are many vulgar people speaking *Katharevousa*”. Cited after *Journal of Parliamentary Discussions* (“Εφημερίς των συζητήσεων της Βουλής”), 1911, session 36, p. 689.

¹³ Miltiadis Malakasis (1869-1943) was born in Missolonghi. His works were influenced by Jean Moréas, whose poems he translated into Greek. His more popular poetry books are *Hours* („Ωρες „) (1903), *So the Nightingales Sing* („Το λένε τ'αηδονάκια“)

chrios (1880-1952); the second period covered the years 1905 through 1915 and its prominent poets were Angelos Sikelianos (1884-1951), Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957) and Kostas Varnalis (1884-1975) (there are others also worth mentioning, such as Soteris Skipis (1881-1951), Markos Avgeris (1884-1973), Romos Filyras, Napoleon Laphiotis, as well as two remarkable female poets – Myrriotissa (real name: Theoni Dracopolou) (1883-1968) and Emilia Stefanou Dafni (1887-1941)); the third phase lasted between 1915 and 1925 and has been qualified as the phase of the Greek “cosmopolitan poets”. According to Trypanis, the Greek “cosmopolitan poets” are divided into two groups: first, those that actually lived as cosmopolitans, such as Kostas Ouranis, Angelos Dhoxas (1900-1985), Nikos Kavvadias (1910-1975); second, the poets who spent hours on end at Athens cafes dreaming of long trips abroad, of journeys to Vladivostok and the unknown Africa, but who had actually never left Greece. Such were Orestis Laskos (1907-1992), Alexandros Baras (1906-1990), Caesar Emmanouil (1902-1970). Naturally, given that, for instance, A. Baras, who was born in 1906 in Constantinople, lived consecutively in Cairo, in Athens and worked as a diplomat at the Greek consulate in Constantinople for no less than 35 years, this strict division can be challenged. On the other hand, the link of Orestis Laskos, one of the founders of the Greek silent cinema, and Caesar Emmanouil, also dubbed “the poet of the Athens nightlife in the interwar period”, with the *Bagio* coffee shop¹⁴, that had turned into a literary centre for the poetic generation of the 1920s, could actually be seen as symbolic, without belittling the significance of the poetic spectrum of their work. In this already non-pejorative sense, they can really be regarded as “café cosmopolitans”, i.e. poets spending hours on end at the Athens places of public resort, dreaming of long journeys to exotic lands.

The fourth and last wave (1931-1940) crowned Greek lyric poetry with the works of an author such as Georgios Seferis (1900-1971)¹⁵.

(1910), *Asphodelus* („Ασφόδελοι“) (1918). In 1939 he assumed the position of a President of the Greek Writers Union.

¹⁴ The role of a focal point and philological parlour of the Athenian intellectual bohemians in that period was performed by the *Bagio* coffee shop (ζαχαροπλαστείο „Μπαγκείο“). Originally a three-storey building and subsequently a four-storey edifice, the *Bagio* or *Pagio* hotel was located at the corner of Athena Street and Omonia square. Its historical building was a piece of work by the architect Ernst Ziller (1837-1923) and was owned by the great donor of Wallachian origin Ioannis Pangas (1814-1895). The hotel was built in the 1890-1894.

¹⁵ Τρυπάνης, Ελληνική ποίηση, σ. 406.

The spirit of modern life, both in Greece and abroad, definitely stands out in the creative efforts of the lyricists after 1920. While exploring the national and Balkan specifics of the Greek modernist canon, let us recall Wittgenstein's famous phrase: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world". Via language, and we will add culture (the peculiar and specific in a society according to Edgar Morin), we "we do not merely formulate our thought, we also shape it"¹⁶. A question that acquired significance for Greek modernism was whether Greek poets could "break away from one or other modernist model and back it up with their own spiritual horizons, artistic visions and individual creative pursuits"¹⁷.

The influence of symbolism on young lyricists continued after 1910 as well. World War I, the surprising expansion of Greece, the shocks brought about by the internal division, the growing spiritual influence of Europe in Greece entailed this neo-symbolist wave in Greek poetry. The poets from the period after 1915 both drew inspiration and distinguished themselves from the achievements of the generation from the 1890s. Prompted by the advice of critics to create lyric poetry based on the "feeling", "spontaneity", "musicality" of the verse, they declared *a priori* their affinity for issues of purely symbolist origin. At the same time they strived to refresh Greek metered speech, bringing it into contact with the daily urban life¹⁸.

Greek lyric poetry opened up to new themes – poets scornfully rejected the "straw flute" of Lambros Porfyas, turned their back on nature and dashed to explore the wonders of the modern city. French literature had been familiar with the image of the bourgeois city from the time of Baudelaire's poems (*The Swan*, *Spleen*), but Greek poetry first discovered it only via the generation of the symbolists of the 1920s. The theme of the city was entirely absent from the lyric poetry of the poetic generation of the 1890s.

The moral shock caused by World War I, mostly in the souls of young people, further aggravated by the drama of the Asia Minor catastrophe, contributed to the shaping of an antiheroic, individualistic and pessimistic mindset. The modern Greek felt that he lived in a defeated country, deprived of ideals, ridiculed, aban-

¹⁶ Я. Кюрацис, Проблемът за традицията, В: Р. Баросов (ред.) *Кои са гърците (съвременна гръцка есеистика)*. София, Колекция аквариум – Средизноморие, 2002, с. 115.

¹⁷ Л. Кирова, *Югоизточноевропейски феномени*. София, АИ „М. Дринов“, 1999, с. 165.

¹⁸ А. Каранτώνης, Εισαγωγή στη νεότερη ποίηση. *Γύρω από τη σύγχρονη ελληνική ποίηση*. Αθήνα, Παπαδήμας Δημ. Ν., 1990, σ. 141.

done and open to all winds. At that point of time “cosmopolitanism” stood out as an ideal of life and art – and as a propensity for adventurous roaming in the modern post-war city, and as delight in every joy and every pleasure offered by the life of megalopolises. The poetry created after 1920 is characterized by anxiety, despair, and along with that by flight to the modern, to the surprising¹⁹.

As already mentioned, at that time the *Bagio* coffee shop turned into a gathering place of the Athenian intellectual bohemians, which played the part of a philological parlour and harboured poets, writers and artists from different artistic fields – one could encounter there representatives of the latest manifestations of lyrical demoticism, of the first scintillating sparks of Cavafism, admirers of the now classic *Strophes* by Moréas or *The Flowers of Evil* by Baudelaire, or else of *Shadows* by Porfyras, repercussions of Ouranis’s Neo-Romantic poetic journeys that came to an end with the advent of Karyotakism (karyotakismos) on the poetic stage²⁰. The young poets gathered at the coffee shop tables contemplated the industrial renewal of the city, experienced ephemeral loves, got in touch with the spirit of cosmopolitanism brought in from Paris and the other European megalopolises. An example in this respect is also provided by the new names chosen by a poet like Angelos Dhoxas to portray the image of the eternal woman in the Neo-Greek lyric poetry: Marie, Toto, Nana, Zozo, Nineta, Ninon, Riri, Loucie – they are all characters in a modern kind of poetry that tears away from the ways of traditionalism and quite often is ready to scandalize and provoke the Puritan minds. The poetic metamorphoses have their sociolinguistic dimensions, but one way or another, what we witness is a modern continuation of “an orientalism with a French touch”, which not simply “embellishes” speech on a superficial level, but leads to a deep-going restructuring of the mental constructs established in a patriarchal society. The verse collection that has become the quintessence of this aspect of the Athenian poetic life, is the *Disharmonic Flute* (“Ο παράφωνος αυλός”) (1929) by the poet Caesar Emmanouil.

A prominent representative of the poetic generation of the 1920s, Caesar Emmanouil (1902-1970), was born in Athens, and his second cousin was the well-known Jean Moréas. He enrolled as a student at the Philosophy Department of the University of Athens, but interrupted his studies to perform his military service. He made his literary debut in 1924, which presented him as a promising poet, writing in the style of Kostas Ouranis, who had already won recognition.

¹⁹ Καραντώνης, Εισαγωγή στη νεότερη ποίηση, σ. 142.

²⁰ Α. Καραντώνης, Προβολές, τ. Α. Αθήνα, 1965, σ. 33.

He contributed to a number of magazines such as *Mousa* (“Μούσα”), *Nea Estia* (“Νέα Εστία”), etc. Apart from the said verse collection *The Disharmonic Flute* of 1929 Caesar Emmanouil wrote three additional ones with the telling titles *Twelve Gloomy Masks* (“Δώδεκα σκύθρωπες μάσκες”, 1931), *The Dynasty of the Chimeras* (“Η δυναστεία των χιμαίρων”, 1940), *Stillae Sanguinis* (1951). He is also regarded as an outstanding translator of poetry, prose, drama and Greek literature owes to him the translations of *The Raven* by E. A. Poe, *The Afternoon of a Faun* (*L'après midi d'un faune*) by S. Mallarmé, *The Drunken Boat* (*Le Bateau ivre*) by A. Rimbaud and many more²¹. Odysseas Elytis appreciated highly Caesar Emmanouil's works, having studied the former's first collection of poems *The Disharmonic Flute* with particular interest in his youth. In his poetry Caesar Emmanouil was influenced by Baudelaire, by the French symbolists Mallarmé and Paul-Valéry, and regarding the Greek authors, by the symbolism of Apostolos Melachrinos and by the cosmopolitanism of Kostas Ouranis.

The prologue to the *Marabou* (1933) verse collection by Nikos Kavvadias also reveals the names of the authors Caesar Emmanouil admired: besides those of A. Melachrinos and K. Ouranis, the name of Nikitas Randos (1907-1988), who experimented with surrealism, is also mentioned as significant for modern Greek poetry. There was a link of close friendship between him and Kavvadias, which was also evidenced by the wonderful poem *A Letter to the Poet Caesar Emmanouil* (1932), written by Kavvadias:

Summary: The poet N. Kavvadias desires to set off on a long journey that will take him to distant lands along with this fellow-writer C. Emmanouil. There he will enjoy a smoke of his *Camel* cigarettes, whisky in hand, while the sun and a multitude of ports will welcome him solemnly like old loves²².

The quoted verses by Kavvadias are actually indicative of how active the artistic dialogue between the authors was. The work, written in 1932, is dedicated

²¹ Κ. Εμμανουήλ, *Ποιήματα (επιμέλεια Κώστα Στεργιόπουλου)*. Αθήνα, Πρόσπερος, 1980; Κ. Εμμανουήλ, *Μεταφράσεις (επιμέλεια Τάσου Κόρφη)*. Αθήνα, Πρόσπερος, 1981.

²² <http://www.palinodiae.com/kaisar-emmanouil-1902-1970/>, 25.02.2020 [“Ξέρω εγώ κάτι που μπορούσε, Καίσαρ, να σας σώσει./ Κάτι που πάντα βρίσκεται σ'αίωνα εναλλαγή,/ κάτι που σχίζει τις θολές γραμμές των οριζόντων,/ και ταξιδεύει αδιάκοπα την ατελείωτη γη./... Μακριά, πολύ μακριά να ταξιδεύουμε,/ κι ο ήλιος πάντα μόνους να μας βρίσκει,/ εσεις τσιγάρα „Κάμελ“ να καπνίζετε,/ κι εγώ σε μια γωνία να πίνω ούισκυ.”].

to the then young C. Emmanouil, probably undergoing a period of depression, whom Kavvadias addresses politely using the courteous plural form. Furthermore, C. Emmanouil himself had already set, via his poems in *The Disharmonic Flute*, a new psychological framework, where the lyrical “I” had quite naturally given way to the lyrical “We”, whereby the poet identifies himself with his generation, but along with that there is also a manifestation of a drive for a kind of formalized communication completely in the spirit of the French aristocratic ways²³. After all, this was also the golden age of European cosmopolitanism, as presented, say, by someone like Paul Morand (1888- 1976)²⁴, in his soul-stirring stories about nearby and far away countries that had captivated the European upper class. Greek poems abounded in Gallicisms and, parallel with that, one could encounter references to French symbolism. In his poem *A Letter to the Poet N. Hager-Boufidis*²⁵, C. Emmanouil shares the following in a poetic form:

Summary: In an anthology given to him by the poet N. Hager-Boufidis, while reading the poems of Henri de Régnier, a well-known French symbolist poet, Caesar Emmanouil discovered the flower yellow daffodil rendering the symbolist concepts of artistic expression²⁶.

One traces signs of Baudelaire’s aesthetics of the ugly in the pale yellow color of the dead flower, but also coupled with unambiguous identification with one of

²³ Καραντώνης, Προβολές, σ. 34.

²⁴ Paul Morand (1888-1976) was a French author, whose popularity coincided with the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s. A graduate of the Paris Institute of Political Science and an Oxford university student, he held numerous diplomatic positions and travelled intensively. His name is a symbol of affiliation to a social stratum enjoying the opportunities for affluent life and special privileges.

²⁵ N. Hager-Boufidis (1899-1950) is an author referred to the interwar generation of cosmopolitan and neo-symbolist artists. He was born in Athens and subsequently lived in Patras and Cairo. He wrote pieces of poetry (*Songs with a Modern Rhythm* – „Τραγούδια σε μοντέρνους σκοπούς“, 1918), prose (*Three Nights of Pleasure* – „Τρεις νύχτες ηδονής“, 1927) and drama (*The Cocaine Drama* – „Το δράμα της κοκαΐνης“, 1928). He received a drama award in a state competition in 1928. He was influenced by Cavafy, Verlain, Francis Jammes.

²⁶ Καραντώνης, Προβολές, σ. 34. [„Μες στην ανθολογία που μου δανείσατε,/ εχτές τα δάχτυλα μου όπως πλανιόνταν,/ το πτώμα ενός ωραιο ναρκίτσου ανάσυραν/ κλιτό πλαίι του Ρενιέ τη Lune Jeune.“].

the most prominent representatives of French symbolism from the early years of the century. Henri de Régnier is a high profile figure in the French literature of that period and the good knowledge of the French originals by the Greek poets associated with the new symbolist wave that had swept across Greek poetry was a prerequisite for the full-scale aesthetic transformations experienced by the Greek lyric poetry of the 1920s and the early 1930s.

The germs of “the modern” were indirectly laid even in those early Demotic authors, who, while using as their vehicle the Demotic language, quite “fragile” from a literary perspective at that time, actually conveyed skillfully their philosophical and spiritual messages relying also on the basic cognitive features embedded in the Balkan folklore preserved over the centuries of historical hardships. Let us trace the poetics hovering in *The Haunted Ship* („Το στοιχειωμένο καράβι“) by G. Dhrosinis, a poet from the end of the 19th century, which poetics probably has as its source the old folklore songs about sea captains and ships possessed moving between past and present, between life and death, between love and emptiness on the waves of an inhospitable sea and mysteriously retreating harbours until the spell is broken and a woman truly loving the captain comes along:

Summary: A captain travels on a haunted ship sailing the sea, waiting for the woman, who will fall in love with him and thereby will break the spell²⁷.

The reminiscence of the story of the mythical ship *The Flying Dutchman* is present via the name of Richard Wagner, written under the title of the work, but an interesting point is that several decades later Caesar Emmanouil also chose the same title, *The Haunted Ship* („Το στοιχειωμένο καράβι“) for one of his works. In the verses by the poet of the Athenian nightlife the ship sails in a typically symbolist setting:

²⁷ Γ. Δροσίνης, *Απαντα ποίηση (1888-1902)*, Α τ. (επιμ. Γ. Παπακώστας). Αθήνα, Σύλλογος προς Διάδοσιν Ωφελίμων Βιβλίων, 1995, σ. 475-476. [„Ποιός είδε μες' στο πέλαγος καράβι στοιχειωμένο/ Με τα ματωμένα τα πανιά, μ' ολόμαυρα κατάρτια/ Ακούραστος, ασάλευτος, χλωμός караβοκύρης/ Μέρες και νύχτες ξαγρυπνά στου караβιού την πλώρη./... Μα θα σταθή και μια αγαπήση αληθινά το δόλιο καπετάνιο.“].

Summary: The doomed ship in Caesar Emmanouil's piece of poetry is featured as rambling across dead water born from the sulfur abyss of a dark "ebony" night²⁸.

Caesar Emmanouil is an author of profound perceptions and interpretations and his poetry cannot be limited to the qualification of "a brilliant photograph of the era" that has reflected the spirit of the new art of photography: stealing seconds, printing fleeting moments of time that will soon fade even from the paper on which they are displayed, for only the present survives in the flow of time²⁹. I believe that the poetry of the Athenian Moréas is much more than art capturing the evanescent and that it is not limited only to mirroring the external. It is true that the titles of the works in *The Disharmonic Flute* are vibrant with the unabating noise of the cabaret, of the spectacle of the hedonistic delight: *A Russian Alone, Plays the Guitar in a Bar* („Ένας Ρώσος σ' ένα μπαρ παίζει κιθάρα“), *On the Dance Floor with a Smoking Lonely Woman* („Στο ντάνσιγκ με μια κυρία που κάπνιζε μόνη“), *The Young Courtesan* („Η μικρή εταιίρα“), *A Young Decadent Talks* („Ομιλεί ένας παρακμασμένος νέος“), *Ballatio Magica (A Magic Dance)* etc. In actual fact, there is a desire transpiring behind this deliberate superficiality for poetic fantasy to bounce off the mundane, to transform the gray daily routine into a never-ending feast dominated by the magical, the beautiful, the erotic, the enchanting. Josephine Baker is the modern Aphrodite, nature is replaced by the dancing floor of the cabaret or the music hall, the saxophone and jazz instruments in general have replaced the violin and the harp, while pale waiters – Russian migrants, smoking lonely females, made-up fatal strangers are the heroes of the new time inspiring C. Emmanouil. The eternal poetic themes such as love, for example, have been ousted by hypostases of moral emancipation and the new social and interpersonal relations are reflected in the ephemerality of flirting, romance, even in the illicit relationship with a totally strange modern hetaera. In modern times poets do not gallop on horses with flowing manes but ride in stuffy train compartments and make fleeting eye-contact with unbeknown beautiful ladies (*Two Electrified Hearts on a Train*, „Δυο καρδιές ηλεκτρισμένες σ' ένα τραίνο“):

²⁸ *Η ελληνική ποίηση ανθολογημένη* (επιμ. Μ. Αυγέρης, Β. Ρώτας), τ. 4. Αθήνα, Παρθενών, 1977, σ. 565. [„Ω! να το πάλι αυτό το ισχνό, φασματικό καράβι!/ Βωβό, όπως πάντα, στα νεκρά νερά ολισθαίνει απόψε-/ Ισκιος θολός που εγέννησε μια Νύχτα εβένινη, όταν/ πίσσα και θειάφι η τρικυμία μέσα στα χάη ξερνούσε.“].

²⁹ Καραντώνης, *Προβολές*, σ. 35.

Summary: Day in and day out the poet rides on a train, where he meets a beautiful and magnetic unbeknown lady, who captivates him, yet he is willing to keep the existing distance between them, as it has reflected the untranslatable magic of illusions: of the possible and impossible, of the probable and improbable, of the existing and non-existent³⁰.

It is fair to say that in his work *Two Electrified Hearts on a Train* the neo-symbolism of Greek poetry tends to be transformed from eccentrically descriptive and gravitating towards exoticism into deeply lyrical. At this point it seems appropriate to mention what Evgenios Aranitsis shared about J. Cocteau's bewilderment, "who asked if pain was the rule or lyricism" and who added that "pain is both, it is the two-faced Janus: as a rule it admonishes, as lyricism it consecrates"³¹.

Caesar Emmanouil's art is reminiscent of the technique of cinematographic art; it uses description to capture the image of the modern city, where the sense of the material prevails: the eternal poetic symbols have found their substitutes related to the modernization and emancipation of urban ways that have brought about the need of a new type of industry – the entertaining one. Poetry became metonymically cinematic, but then, this was the time of a dynamic evolution of the art of filmmaking: the number of cinema halls increased visibly, the production of Greek films was launched. In 1925 there were 32 operational outdoor cinema sites in Athens, and in 1930 their number was already 52³². In the 1928-1932 period the number of the cinema halls across Greece reached 71³³. The so-called

³⁰ Κ. Εμμανουήλ, *Ποιήματα (επιμέλεια Κώστα Στεργιόπουλου)*. Αθήνα, Πρόσπερος, 1980. [„Το πρωί, μέσα στο τραίνο, όπως τη θέση μου/ - την ίδια πάντα - παίρνω απέναντί σας,/ τ'ώραίο, λιτό κεφάλι μου προσφέρετε/ σα φρούτο σε κρυστάλλινη φρουτιέρα/...Χρόνια με το ίδιο τραίνο ταξιδεύουμε,/ λικνίζοντας τ'απίθανα όνειρά μας:/ στο ερωτικό, τ'αμφίβολο ταξίδι μας,/ ω, αζ μένουμε κι οι δυο μας πάντα ξένοι!“].

³¹ Ε. Αраницис, Проблемът за традицията, В: Р. Баросов (ред.) *Кои са гърците (съвременна гръцка есеистика)*. София, Колекция аквариум – Средизноморие, 2002, с. 169.

³² Ε. Δελβερούδη, Κινηματογράφος, Στο: Χ. Χατζηωσήφ (επ.), *Ιστορία της Ελλάδος*, Αθήνα, Βιβλιόραμα, 2000, σ. 367.

³³ Γ. Σολδάτος, *Ιστορία ελληνικού κινηματογράφου, τ. Ι*. Αθήνα, Αιγόκερως, 1999, σ. 32. After 1920, the cinematographic business aroused ever more significant entrepreneurial interest reflected in the increased import of cinema equipment and films. However, the high government taxes reaching up to 65 percent of the gross income were a serious

cinema and variety houses, combining cinema screenings and variety programmes, emerged in the Paleo and Neo Faliro neighbourhoods of Athens, which had old reputation as local entertainment venues.

Quite in the spirit of the cinematographic art, amidst this flashy exuberance of entertainment, exoticism, novelty, invariably associated with certain mild melancholy, as well, we, the readers of this poetry, cannot but feel as part of its magic roaming amidst the glittering lights of ports by night and smoky bars, where tango is played, feel as part of the thousands of the intertwining glances of lonely people in the modern city; we cannot remain indifferent to their thirst for love, seen as a journey, a woman, a young man or music, picture, sensation, we cannot but feel the thrill evoked by the sound of sirens of steamers leaving port, the whistles of departing trains, the whizzing of taking off airplanes that seem to pass through our souls as well. For we are all on a journey: be it in reality or when day-dreaming, while awake or asleep. Life *per se* is a journey. Such as we manage to achieve. Such as we have managed to inherit. And such as we will manage to hand down.

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obstacle to the development of cinema halls. The regular publication of the *Cinema Star* magazine issued by Iraklis Ikonoumou started in 1924 and its existence continued even after the death of its founder, until 1969. It promoted new films and cinema equipment and published film reviews as well. In the early 1930s a regular film review column appeared on the pages of the *Nea Estia* magazine as well, which was indicative of interest on the part of the viewers in further information on the topics of modern cinema. See also Δελβερούδη, *Κινηματογράφος*, σ. 370.

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Fotiny Christakoudy–Konstantinidou

Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski
15, Tsar Osvoboditel Blv., 1504 Sofia
Bulgaria
fotiny_christakoudy@hotmail.com

THE THEATRE AND THE CITY ON THE WAY OF EUROPEANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION OF BULGARIAN CULTURE¹

Joanna Minkova Spassova-Dikova

Abstract: *The paper discusses some issues which pertain to the relationship between theatre and urban culture. The survey is part of a larger research, which aims to trace the role of the theatre for building urban culture and memory in the process of asserting the national identity at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the context of the modernization and Europeanization of the Bulgarian society after the Liberation until the Second World War. Problems about the significance of the established national theatres in Central and Eastern Europe during the investigated period are outlined. In focus is the professionalization and institutionalization of the Bulgarian theatre activities with the foundation of the National Theatre. Important questions about the repertoire, the professional acting staff, the native and the foreign are put into reconsideration.*

Keywords: *City, National Theatre, Modernization, Europeanisation, National Identity*

The text addresses some issues about the connection between the theatre and the city on the way of Europeanization and modernization of Bulgarian culture. It is a part of a larger study that aims at outlining the role of theatre in the creation of the urban culture and collective memory preservation in the process of establishing of the national identity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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Every history of the European theatre begins with its appearance in Ancient Greece². The theatre comes out when there is a community, there is a city. The theatre is bounded with the city. I mean with some larger city, even the capital, which is a cultural center. It is part of the urban culture. Not that there can not be an out-of-town theatre, but at least nearby there must be enough people within a reasonable transport distance. Theatre is a collective art and is extremely dependent on its audiences. Without spectators, there is no theatre. Basically, the word “theatre” comes from the ancient Greek word *theatron* (θέατρον) – a place for spectacles, a place where many people gather in one place to watch a show and to have fun. It is derived from the verb *θεάομαι* (theáomai, “I view”)³. This word designates both the building and the art itself.

According to *Cambridge Dictionary* “theatre” means:

- A building, room, or outside structure with rows of seats, each row usually higher than the one in front, from which people can watch a performance or other activity;
- The writing or performance of: plays, opera, etc., written to be performed in public;
- Behaviour that is not sincere and is intended just to produce a particular effect or to attract attention;
- An area or place in which important military events happen⁴.

The city needs the theatre, and the theatre needs the city.

Theatre has been the most popular art for centuries. In ancient times, theatres attracted tens of thousands of visitors. For example, the Epidaurus (4th century BC) seats were 14,000 and the theatre in Syracuse (3rd century BC) had 61 rows for 15,000 spectators.

² O. Brockett, F. Hildy. *History of Theatre*. Pearson, 10th edition, 2007; G. Wickam, *A History of Theatre*. Phaidon, 1994; A. Nicoll. *The Development of the Theatre*. London, George G. Harrap & Co Ltd, 1966.

³ Й. Спасова-Дикова, „ДИВ(Н)ИЯТ ТЕАТЪР”, *Ното Ludens*, бр. 11, 2005, р. 257-266: http://homoludens.bg/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pages-from-hl_11-22_Divniat_tearar.pdf – 21.01.2020.

⁴ Theatre. *Cambridge Dictionary*: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/theatre> – 21.01.2020.

Over the centuries, theatre has been not only an entertainment but also a tool in the hands of the authorities to manipulate the masses.

Important is the topic about the national theatres, which are called upon to pursue targeted policies of power structures. Over the centuries, their role was changing. During the 17th and the 18th centuries, they were founded primarily to meet the needs of the aristocratic elite. Gradually they were bourgeoisified during the period of formation of national consciousness in European countries by proclaiming cultural and political nationalist ideas. Most of the theatres founded in the mid-19th century and the beginning of the 20th century in Central and Eastern Europe were of this type⁵. A kind of culmination in the ideologization of the national theatres as conduits of nationalism and party directives was reached in the 20th century, especially in countries with totalitarian regimes.

The discussion about the national theatres is related to the issues of national identity, nationalism, cultural formation. They also have a strong mnemonic function for safeguarding the collective and historical memory. In the Balkans alone today the national theatres are around 35 in number⁶.

Questions arise: who needs the national theatres – the state, the cultural elite or the general public; who are the spectators of the national theatres: the whole nation, the bourgeois viewer, the capital city, the countryside, the cultural elite; how national theatres speak to the nation; what is the meaning of the mother tongue; what is the role of national theatres for national cultural legitimation, both within a nation and in comparison with other nations; how they present and how well they respond to cultural differences; to what extent are the problems of national theatres in Central and Eastern Europe the same as those in Western Europe⁷?

As a rule, European national theatres use their folklore traditions and folk poetry, according to the views propagated by the German philosophers. An important thinker is Herder, who believes in national self-determination and the *Volksgeist* and encourages all nations to express themselves in their own way⁸. Herder's ideas related to admiration for folk songs and folklore encourage intellectuals from European countries to seek out unique aspects of cultural

⁵ St. Wilmer, Introduction, In: St. Wilmer (ed.) *National Theatres in a Changing Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4-5.

⁸ J. G. Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*. B. Suphan (ed.). Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1877, vol. 9, p. 525-529.

expression in their own peoples that bear witness to separate and distinct national identities. Many of the ideas of national identity that exist in European countries today stem from the myths created in the 19th century by cultural nationalists, influenced by the ideals and values of German nationalism and French and German romanticism.

The term “national theatre” is usually associated with the notion of an institution located in a monumental building in the capital, maintained, supported, funded by the state, which mainly stages works by national playwrights⁹. This concept of “national theatre” as well as the modern idea of “nation” is entirely European, both of which originated simultaneously in the years surrounding the French Revolution of 1789. The intellectual roots of nationalism, shared with the ideas of national theatre, are in tune with development of the theory of French and German romanticism of the late 18th century¹⁰.

Historically, the idea and movements for the creation of a national theatre preceded the formation of a nation-state. Most of the established public theatres were national scenes before the national theatres were created. Usually the founders of this kind of theatres were theatre actors, actors-managers with undetermined social status or intellectuals – educated middle-class people who were trying to cultivate national consciousness through national repertoire, to attract a wider national audience, to create a sustainable public institution in the capital, assuming the functions of the still-forming nation-state as counteraction against foreign influences, elitism, unstable status of the creators, etc. The theory and practice of national theatres passed from a debate about the dominance of imperial languages in the 18th century to the argument that theatres should serve tourists rather than the citizens in the 21st century. This borderline, transnational character of national theatres determines the ideas of the repertoire, the place where they have to be (usually in the center of the city), the audiences, as well as the conditions for national legitimation, namely naturalization, understood as recognition of the rights of an alien on an equal base with those of the locals.

⁹ M. Carlson, National Theatre: Then and Now, In: *National Theatres in a Changing Europe*, p. 21.

¹⁰ See L. Kruger, *The National Stage: Theatre and Cultural Legitimation in England, France and America*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Important is Benedict Anderson's idea of the nation as an "imagined community"¹¹. "Nationhood"¹² is always dependent on imagination, not reality, and the communicating media is eager to fill our consciousness. In this sense, the concept of "national theatre" is relative. The main thing is to find a suitable communication environment and a common code of mutual understanding. The "Imagined Community" should be seen as a small nation in a larger nation-state, such as the European Community and the "National Theatre", as a place where the spirit, identity and character of the nation are sold to the tourists who visit it.

Part of the problematicity of the concept of "national theatre" is due to the relativity of the term "nationalism", which scientists tend to consider as the negative driving force behind the aggression manifested in the 20th century. At the same time, preserving the past from a political viewpoint may not necessarily be a conservative or a progressive gesture. The potential of theatre is to present on the stage symbols that embody and preserve national identity and memory, as well as to prepare the people for the future.

The theatre in Bulgaria in the 19th century played a special role in the struggle for national identity and preservation of the national memory of the historical past.

The *chitalishta*¹³ during the Revival were a cradle of arts and culture in Bulgaria. It is in them that the first flames of national awakening were ignited. *Chitalishta*, founded in the second half of the 19th century throughout the country as amateur cultural and educational organizations, offered the Bulgarians under Ottoman rule opportunities to develop national cultural and revolutionary activities. This usually happened in some form of conspiracy, legitimized as arts and crafts ateliers, meetings, lectures, concerts, performances, literary and dance nights. Sometimes open patriotic propaganda was held during the events.

The year 1856 marked the beginning of the Bulgarian theatre of modern times, with the first two theatrical performances in the *chitalishta* of Lom and Shumen being mentioned. Initially, the main repertoire was translated and included historical dramas, melodramas and comedies. Among the main authors played were J.-B. Moliere, G. Lessing, V. Hugo, F. Voltaire, and Fr. Schiller. The most frequently presented comedy was *Mihal-Mishkoed* (*Mihal the Mouse-Eater*).

¹¹ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York, Verso Revised Edition, 1983.

¹² *Nationhood* has a positive connotation and is associated with *motherhood* and *fatherhood*. The term is different from *nationalism*. See below.

¹³ Volunteer community-centre cultural organizations.

It was an adaptation made by Sava Dobroplodni, on *O, Leprentis* by the Greek playwright M. Hourmouzis. Also popular was the melodrama *Mногострадална Geneveva* (*Long-suffering Genevieve*), again an adaptation of German text by supposed authors Ch. von Schmid, L. Tieck or Fr. Hebel. One of the audience's favorite historical dramas was *Velizarii* (*Belisarius*) by the Austrian writer H. Trutschen. All over the country, these plays were staged numerous times over several years. The spectators greeted them with the enormous enthusiasm described by Ivan Vazov in *Pod Igoto* (*Under the Yoke*) in the chapter *The Performance*¹⁴. Often, what happened on stage was taken for granted. Reactions were naive, commented out loudly. There was a direct communication of the spectators with the amateur actors, who were often unreservedly identified by the audience with the characters presented. Sometimes the spectators tried to protect the hero or heroine and forcibly chased the villain out of the hall. The first Bulgarian playwrights were usually teachers educated abroad. Among them were Sava Dobroplodni, Krustjo Pishurka, Dobri Voynikov, Vassil Drumev, who translated plays, wrote original texts and made performances with their pupils or elder amateurs.

The idea of building a permanent national theatre company, financially supported by the state, emerged in the first years after the Liberation. In most of the Central and Eastern European states, that became independent in the 19th century, the desire to institutionalize and professionalize theatrical activities was connected with the processes of the establishment of national identity.

In Bulgaria, one of the first amateur troupes was the one of the Plovdiv printers, who founded several theatre associations. As a result of their active actions in 1881, the Regional Assembly of Plovdiv decided to make a state decision of paramount importance, namely to allocate from the budget of the Directorate of National Enlightenment an amount for the "formation of one theatre troupe"¹⁵.

The newly formed Bulgarian Theatre Troupe performed its first performance on June 11, 1883, in the only special theatre building in Bulgaria at that time – the *Luxembourg* Theatre in Plovdiv.

In 1885, Eastern Rumelia and the Principality of Bulgaria were united and for political reasons the activities of the troupe were interrupted. Many of its founders moved to the new capital Sofia. However, in the city of Plovdiv, which

¹⁴ Ив. Вазов, XVII. Представлението, В: *Под игото*: <https://www.slovo.bg/showwork.php3?AuID=14&WorkID=5794&Level=3> – 22.01.2020.

¹⁵ *Дневници от Третата редовна сесия на Областното събрание*, ПЛОВДИВ 1882, от 10.12.1881, 1022–1023. Г. Саев, *История на българския театър*, Т. 2. София, АИ „Проф. Марин Дринов“, 1997, с. 57, 71.

remained a significant cultural center, another amateur troupe gathered in 1887, which in 1888 made a very successful tour in the capital. In the same year a new wooden theatre with 374 seats was built in Sofia. It was named *Osnova*, after the name of the troupe – *Balgarska narodna teatralna trupa* (Bulgarian People's Theatre Troupe *Basis*), which lasted until 1890. The actors in it were the pioneers of the Bulgarian professional theatre (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Sketch of the Theatre Osnova, 1888.

How Sofia looked like at the end of the 19th century? In his diary, *Konstantin Jireček* shares his first impressions of Sofia in 1879:

A crooked street with trees, open oriental shops, a terrible bumpy sidewalk, and a terrible mud. Big village! Finally – an open square. To the left is a one-storey house with 16 windows on the facade and a guard at the entrance. It must be the palace [...]. In front of the palace, the embryos of some kind of garden with a *kiosk* for musicians and a cafe are enclosed. Everywhere you can see only one-storeyed Turkish brick and wood houses, with many windows, nice outside, but just like from a book. Huge water holes on the streets – *Bulgarian Venice*¹⁶.

¹⁶ К. Иречек, 10 ноември, понеделник, В: *Български дневник*, Т. I от 30 окт. 1879 до 21 окт. 1881 г. Прев. Ст. Аргиров. Пловдив, Хр. Г. Данов, 1930–1932: http://www.omda.bg/public/biblioteka/irechek/irechek_1_2.htm – 03.01.2020.

The appearance of the capital, whose population after the Liberation was about 20,000 people, was not much different from other towns in the country (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 View of Sofia and Vitosha from the Sharenia most Bridge (today Lavov most – Lion’s Bridge). Felix Kanitz. Watercolor. BAS Digital Collection.

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the settlements underwent a rapid reorganization, and their construction was already in accordance with the set state parameters. There were numerous processes of mastering new terrains, modern functions, building and settlement typologies, technical and aesthetic solutions were adapted and applied. Some of the regional practices already adopted were retained or upgraded¹⁷.

In 1890, a new *Stolichna damatichno-operna trupa* (*Capital Dramatic and Opera Trupe*) was formed at the proposal of the Ministry of National Education. In 1891, the opera department became known as the Sofia Opera, which played on the stage of *Slavyanska besseda*. Due to some financial difficulties and lack of state support, the troupe was disbanded and the drama division took the name *Stolichna balgarska damaticheska trupa* to which was added the poetic metonymy for theatre *Salza i smjah* (*Tear and Laugh*), on the idea of Dr. Krustyo Krastev.

An important role in accelerating the process of professionalization of the Bulgarian theatre had the decision of the Ministry of National Education in 1895

¹⁷ Ст. Ташева, Градът и култовите сгради, В: *Българският XX век в изкуствата и културата*. К. Леви, Й. Спасова-Дикова, Е. Трайкова (ред.) Институт за изследване на изкуствата – БАН, 2019, с. 65.

to grant four scholarships for training abroad. These fellows and the other few enthusiasts who returned from 1898 to 1899 were appointed to the troupe after a competition. These were the first professional actors in Bulgaria. By the end of the century, the *Salza i smyah* company already had professional artists trained in reputable schools outside Bulgaria.

Throughout the period, the glances were directed towards Europe with a longing for inclusion in European culture and values. These were the years of creation: urban culture was built, the new capital became richer, national intelligentsia, literature, theatre were created – the foundations were laid in all spheres of national culture. The desire to make up for the missed was extremely strong. Democratic ideas were making their way. Efforts to increase national self-esteem and to promote national identity were great. It was significant in this respect that in newly liberated Bulgaria the first state institutions were the National Library, the National Museum, the State Drawing School and the National Theatre.

At its 39th meeting in December 1898, the Ninth Ordinary National Assembly voted to establish a special fund for the construction of a theatre building in Sofia¹⁸. This was an important step in establishing a national theatre in Bulgaria.

The Minister of Education Ivan Shishmanov, who held the post from 1903 to 1907, had a great deal of credit for further institutionalizing the theatre. In his program for education and culture he raised the question of constructing the building of the future National Theatre, which would be the main cultural institute under the Ministry of Education. This was outlined in his report from 12.06.1903 to Prince Ferdinand¹⁹.

The company manager Iliya Milarov has been appointed “quartermaster” by an order of the Minister of National Education, Iv. Shishmanov from January 1, 1904. In the spring of 1904, the company was renamed *Bulgarian National Theatre*²⁰.

¹⁸ *Стенографически дневник*. IX Обикновено Народно събрание, 39-то заседание, 15.12.1898: Кр. Гошева, *История на българския театър*, Т. 3. София, АИ „Проф. Марин Дринов“, 1997, с. 23, 32.

¹⁹ Ив. Шишманов, Програма за образование и култура, *Училищен преглед*, 1903, N 6–7, с. 113–125.

²⁰ *Централен държавен архив*, ф. 195К, оп. 1–3; Ив. Попов, *Миналото на българския театър. Спомени и документи*, Т. 1–5. София, Наука и изкуство, с. 584; Сф. Н. Йорданов, Към дебата за 100-годишнината от основаването на Народния

On the site of the former wooden theatre *Osnova* of the estranged land, on the basis of a decree of the Council of Ministers of April 22, 1904 with the Decree No. 258 of November 22, 1904 of Ferdinand, the building of the National Theatre began²¹.

The National Theatre is one of the emblematic buildings of Sofia at the beginning of the 20th century along with the Parliament, the Palace, the Alexander Nevski Cathedral, the Mineral Baths and the Synagogue. Its presence in the city center could not go unnoticed as far as in urban planning, it was both an external connection of the metropolitan area with the centers of many European cities and at the same time an internal point of intersection of the cultural life in the capital²².

The National Theatre was opened on January 3, 1907 with a solemn ceremony, which was intended to bring together the elite of the society in the Capital. The decorative luxury of the theatre was combined with the luxury and charm of the building and the interior. Entering the theatre, viewers fell into a world unknown to them. The invited people were selected according to a strictly regulated protocol. This raised the resentment of some circles of university intellectuals, who were not among the invited “elites”. The escort of the Prince was whistled on the way to the theatre. The ensuing violent public scandal resulted in the closure of Sofia University for six months with Ferdinand’s decree. All of this obscured the brilliance of the conceived nationwide celebration as a grand “unseen and unheard” apotheosis of the national spirit and the arts²³ (Fig. 3).

Particularly important was the question of creating an original national drama. Two years before the opening of the theatre, a competition for an original Bulgarian play was announced, which was won by Anton Strashimirov with his comedy *Svekarva* (*Mother in Law*). It premiered in the spring of 1907. Among the plays from the new Bulgarian dramaturgy, which find their first realization on the

театър. *Homo Ludens*, N 8–9, 2003, p. 349–355: <http://homoludens.bg/articles/kam-debata-za-stogodishninata-ot-osnovavaneto-na-narodnia-teatar/> – 24.01.2020.

²¹ Постановление на Министерски Съвет от 22 април 1904; Указ № 258 от 22 ноември 1904 г. на Фердинанд, Тошева, *История на българския театър*, с. 28, 32.

²² See Й. Спасова-Дикова, Ст. Ташева, Институционализиране на театралната дейност, В: *Българският XX век*, с. 55.

²³ Ст. Радев, Трябва да говорим днес за снощното тържество, а мисълта ни отива неотразимо към снощния скандал, *Вечерна поща*, бр. 1930, 05.01.1907, с. 1; Откриването на Народния театър. Бурна студентска демонстрация, *Ден*, бр. 1075, 05.01.1907, с. 3; Телеграма на д-р Константин Иречек до д-р Любомир Милетич „Какви са тия работи... театроту убило университета“, *Ден*, бр. 1081, 09.01.1907, с. 3; Опозоряване на нашата държава пред чуждия свят, *Мир*, бр. 2060, 08.02.1907.

stage of the new National Theatre were: *Kam propast (To the Abyss)*, *Borislav, Pod igoto (Under the Yoke)*, *Ivaylo* by Iv. Vazov; *Parvite (The First)*, *Nevyasta Boryana (Bride Boryana)*, *Zidari (Masons)*, *Zmeyova svatba (Dragon's Wedding)* by P. Y. Todorov; *Vampir (Vampire)*, *Nad bezkrastni grobove (Above Graves without Crosses)*, *Kashta (House)* by A. Strashimirov; *V polite na Vitosha (At the Foot of the Vitosha Mountain)*, *Kogato grum udari (When the Thunder Strikes)* by P. Y. Yavorov; *Boyan Magesnikat (Boyan the Magician)*, *Stariyat voin (The Old Warrior)* by K. Hristov; *Mazhemrazka (Androphoba)* by St. L. Kostov; *Yuda (Judas)*, *Dyado Klime (Old Man Klime)*, *Plennikat ot Trikeri (The Trikeri Prisoner)* by K. Mutafov, and others²⁴. The main themes of these works were related to the past of Bulgaria and the national spirit. They deliberately aimed at preservation of national memory.



Fig. 3 Photo of the National Theatre in Sofia, 1907.

A key figure for the first years of the development of the National Theatre was Pencho Slaveykov, despite the tumultuous and short term of his reign. He was

²⁴ *Народен театър „Иван Вазов“. Летопис: януари 1904 – юли 2004.* Съст. Н. Вандов, Ан. Каракостова, Ив. Гърчев, Сн. Гълъбова, Ас. Константинов. София, Валентин Траянов, 2004; Тошева, *История на българския театър.*

appointed manager in March 1908. The prominent Bulgarian writer, poet and modernist critic was, in fact, the first director of the newly created National Theatre. Slaveykov embodied the characteristic modern ideas in Europe from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In August – October, he organized a tour of the theatre in the European part of the Ottoman Empire in order to proclaim the Bulgarian spirit and culture among the Bulgarians in the still non-liberated territories. In the summer and autumn, the theatre was temporarily run by the Minister of Education, Andrey Protich. After returning to the theatre from the tour, Slaveykov was fired and a bit later re-appointed. He resigned in February 1909 (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 Cartoon of Pencho Slaveykov by Alexander Bozhinov.

In the first number of journal *Misal* from 1910 was issued the Slaveykov's programme text, written already in 1909, where he claimed:

National theatres are not establishments that make money or entice audiences with aimless and senseless pleasures: they are cultural institutions [...] With the

strong foundations of our theatre as national, as higher cultural institute, as a temple, where to worship with Bulgarian language and through it to manifest in art forms and images our creative power and our awareness of life – with this we are approaching the task of a real theatre²⁵.

Peyo Yavorov, who was the artistic secretary and playwright of the National Theatre from 1908 to 1913, also played an important role in establishing the theatre as a national cultural institution. His efforts were aimed at improving the repertoire by seeking a balance between classical and modern: European, Balkan and national dramaturgy; comedy and drama.

During the first decades of its existence, the National Theatre was in competition with the new forms of entertainment and tumultuous activities such as cinematography, operetta and variety show. Theatre became an integral part of the modern way of life in the major cities of the country and has attracted the attention of both the intellectual elite and the ruling circles. The Bulgarian theatre entered the cultural dialogue with Europe and with the world mainly by the means of translation of dramatic texts, attraction of foreign directors, and following some of the emblematic world theatre art models.

The mnemonic function of theatre is to preserve the memory, to remind the forgotten and the lessons of history. The theatre is called to awaken, to shatter through catharsis, through fear and compassion²⁶.

Does the theatre lose today its position of a big media that keeps us awake – us and our memory in the battle with the undeniably bigger and stronger media – cinema, television, internet? The biggest advantage of theatre is that it is live art. It brings us back to the past, to the roots in a process of live communication.

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²⁵ П. Славейков, Национален театър, *Мисъл*, 1910, бр. 1: П. Славейков, Национален театър. В: *Събрани съчинения в 8 тома*, т. 5. Ангел Тодоров (ред.) София, Български писател, 1959, с. 268–301.

²⁶ Аристотел. Глава 14. Как да се предизвиква състрадание и страх. Сценична постановка. Трагичното удоволствие. Какви митове да се разработват, В: *Поетика*: – 23.01.2020.<http://theseus.proclassics.org/node/76> – 23.01.2020.

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Joanna Minkova Spasova-Dikova

Institute of Art Studies
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
21 Krakra st., 1504 Sofia
Bulgaria
joanasd@yahoo.co.uk

OPERA AND MODERNIZATION: THE CASE OF BULGARIA¹

Alexandra Milanova

Abstract: *Opera music may be much more central to our understanding of urban modernity than is habitually thought. Since its beginnings in Bulgaria around 1890, opera has had a strong relationship with urban space and the public sphere. Most opera houses were built in urban centers and came to be seen both as secular temples and sites of entertainment, in which the appreciation of high art coexisted with conviviality.*

This paper aims at demonstrating that development of opera art is inextricably linked to the process of modernization of Bulgarian cities. By addressing the impact of this classical art on urbanity, the paper will also attempt to show how opera houses have been among important in towns“ transformations and alteration from the late 19th to the second half of the 20th c. By studying the inception and development of opera theaters in particular Bulgarian cities and through its focus on the liaison between music and localities, this paper should add to the vast body of scholarship in social and cultural history to do with the city, and the meaning of urbanity in Bulgaria.

Keywords: *Opera Houses, Bulgaria, Modernization, Cities, Music*

“**I**f you want to find the level of a city, you ask if they have an opera house”, advised the Chinese composer Xiao Bai, voicing an opinion, popular in musical circles of the previous century. And specified: “If they do, it’s a progressive, developed city”².

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² S. Melvin, J. Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese*. New York, Algora Publishing, 2004, p. 306.

Indeed, since its origination in Italy in the 17th c., opera has been closely linked with the city space and the public sphere. Most opera houses stand proudly in the center of some big city, functioning as both secular temples and entertainment facilities, as spaces where high art cohabits with popular celebrations, as well as with frequent manifestations of social, political and economic supremacy³.

The opera is tied inseparably with the progress of modern European cities⁴. Bulgaria is not an exception. The first Bulgarian opera theatre was opened in 1890 in Sofia. Following the example of the capital, in the next decades seven of the larger cities of the country also were privileged with operas. The development of Bulgarian operatic art made the opera a component of public life and culture in Sofia, Stara Zagora, Varna, Rousse, Plovdiv, Bourgas, Pleven and Blagoevgrad. Gradually, these places became models to be imitated. The standards they set were adopted by much smaller townships. That special positioning of larger Bulgarian cities was backed materially by the allocation of rather lavish resources for the erection of monumental buildings, though in other respects they would still be lagging behind European cultural centers⁵. That effort included the building of opera houses. Bearing in mind such specificities of Bulgarian urban development after the Liberation (1878), this text aims at following and analyzing the appearance and development of opera theaters in Bulgaria in connection with the modernization of the Bulgarian town, beginning with the end of the 19th c. and ending in the second half of the 20th c.

Opera was brought to Bulgaria in 19th c. There were varied performances of Bulgarian and foreign companies, singers, choirs and orchestras, with shows comprising fragments and indigenous versions. Gradually, it developed into a Bulgarian opera, into something done by many for a multitude. It started with one state opera group (Sofia, 1890), then there was one amateur group (the regional opera of Stara Zagora for South Bulgaria, 1925), followed by the state operas of Varna (1947), Rousse (1949), Plovdiv (1953) and Bourgas (1954); finally there

³ P. Hohenberg, L. H. Lees, *The making of urban Europe, 1000-1994*. Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1995, pp. 78-81.

⁴ The Opera House Effect: <https://www.citylab.com/design/2011/11/opera-house-effect/586/> - 22.09.2019.

⁵ Велинова, З., И. Начев. *София и балканската модерност. Белград, София, Загреб, Любляна*. София, Рива, 2016, с. 9.

came the state operas of Pleven (1970) and Blagoevgrad (1977). Thus, Bulgarian opera no longer remained limited to the capital, becoming a national affair, substantial and significant in the context of Bulgarian musical practice. Moreover, the major part of opera art started to be produced in the province, penetrating everyday life, forming new notions, preparing generations of opera artists and opera lovers. During the envisaged period it is the provinces that stimulated the creation of original Bulgarian opera works and shaped the basic characteristics of Bulgarian opera singing. Provincial opera companies went on tours abroad, earning international recognition. Of fundamental importance, however, was that they ingrained themselves in the urban *milieu*, becoming irreplaceable and necessary.

In comparison to other cultural institutions, the opera in Bulgaria developed with difficulty, resulting in a significant retardation; that was due to a general lack of understanding, combined with lack of interest and support on the part of the state. We should also keep in mind that opera, being a synthetic art, is especially complex, and that there was constant lack of singers and directors. Despite all that, the Bulgarian opera surpassed in its development composition and musicology, as well as chamber music and singing. That phenomenon had diverse causes. On the one hand, there were the centuries-old traditions of folk singing; on the other hand, there was a well-developed theater, in which acting was often accompanied by music. After the Liberation, opera music was popularized by the military wind orchestras with Czech conductors, who for the first time introduced wide audiences to *pot-pourri*⁶ from classical operas. Also should be noted the tours of opera singers and companies from abroad, which sharpened the interest of the Bulgarian cultural public⁷.

Occasionally, opera music (fragments or entire titles) could be heard in Bulgaria some decades before the Liberation of 1878. However, opera pieces entered the repertoire of city choirs and orchestras only in the 1890s, when the cultural situation permitted the realization of the idea of Bulgarian opera. In the context of modernization of all spheres of public life, in the last decade of the 19th c. came the first attempts to institutionalize opera-type vocal and instrumental practices. In the bigger towns, singing and musical societies were being established, catering to specific cultural needs, i.e. providing church and lay music on occasion, and also giving concerts. For some of them, the creation of Bulgarian opera was

⁶ A sequence of popular tunes from one or several musical opuses.

⁷ Р. Бикс, *Български оперен театър до 1944 г. Материали и наблюдения*. София, Музика, 1976, с. 21-24.

set as part of their mission. Opera fragments were being included more frequently in concerts and stage performances of choirs, which by that time had become differentiated, and school choirs separated from the others. Opera pieces would make a concert more attractive to the public, and that was aptly used by some conductors. Moreover, some choirs would perform operatically to mark special occasions, viz., a first public concert, rebirth of a musical group or change in its character (e.g. from church to lay music performance), participation in a regional or municipal competition, on tours, etc.⁸

Simultaneously, in the context of lay education, in school textbooks and readers information started to be included, albeit sporadically and chaotically, as to what is an opera, air, recitative, and duet. Thus pupils had an initial introduction to opera; it found a place in their worldview. However, as theatrical performance, opera was familiar, exceptionally, to some of the richer merchants, and to teachers, doctors, engineers, who during their years of education, or a holiday, or business trip, had gone to an opera – out of curiosity or snobbery. For all others it remained just “a sound and a color” in the picture of “the vast European culture”⁹.

The first who attempted to start a Bulgarian opera theater were the alumni of the Prague Conservatory, singers Dragomir Kazakov and Ivan Slavkov, together with pianist Anguel Boukoureshtliev. On August 8, 1890, they gave a successful concert in the Military Club in Sofia, which encouraged them to try starting an opera theater, with the support of influential officials from the Ministry of education. Among them was Dr. Ivan Shishmanov, who helped Kazakov in getting a small subsidy, in order to organize and lead a “Drama and opera troupe”. The Drama section was staffed from the *Osnova* (*Foundation*) Bulgarian folk theatrical company; and the opera section, by the three musicians mentioned, plus three Czech singers: Olga Dobřova, Anna Kratochvílová, and Jaroslav Hašek¹⁰.

Thus, about a decade after the Liberation and about a decade before the first Bulgarian opera was written – *Siromahkinya* (*Poor woman*, 1899), there was a professional opera troupe in Sofia. However, post-Liberation Bulgaria did not have the financial means to support two stage arts together, viz. drama and opera. The drama, i.e. the *Osnova* “timber house” theater, that had been started just seven years ago, had to step back and give way to the “operas” (as in German), pushed by

⁸ Р. Бикс, *На опера в стара София*. София, АИ „Проф. Марин Дринов”, 2000, с. 29-30.

⁹ Р. Нейков, *Три десетилетия по българските музикални сцени*. София, Сиела, 2007, с. 73.

¹⁰ Бикс, *На опера в стара София*, с. 31.

the influential Dr. Shishmanov¹¹. Thus, the *Opera and Drama Troupe of the Capital* was established. However, the state support was to be shared by both arts, and so were the theatrical stage and the rehearsal rooms. Even the audience was the same, with some exceptions.

As can be seen in the table below, the opera section would go for a most difficult repertoire, and though it performed for two seasons only (1891-1892), there could be no doubt as to what kind of opera was envisaged: the opera of Verdi and Donizetti, Bizet and Tchaikovsky, Mozart and Mascagni.

Operas and fragments of operas staged by the Opera Section of the Opera and Drama Troupe of the Capital (1891-1892)¹²

Fragments		
Title	Author	Season
The Merry Wives of Windsor	Otto Nicolai	January-June 1891
Il trovatore	Giuseppe Verdi	
Faust	Charles Gounod	
Martha	Friedrich von Flotow	
Evgheniy Oneghin	Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky	
Les Huguenots	Giacomo Meyerbeer	
Un ballo in maschera	Giuseppe Verdi	
Don Juan	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	
Lucia di Lammermoor	Gaetano Donizetti	
Operas		
Title	Author	Opening night
Faust	Charles Gounod	January 22, 1891
Il trovatore	Giuseppe Verdi	January 30, 1891
Carmen	Georges Bizet	March 27, 1891
Lucrezia Borgia	Gaetano Donizetti	July 9, 1891
La traviata	Giuseppe Verdi	September 1, 1891

¹¹ Бикс, *Българският оперен театър*, с. 78.

¹² The information is quoted from Ив. Попов, *Минало на българския театър. Спомена и документи*. Т. 2, София, Наука и изкуство, 1939 and Др. Казаков, *Материали по историята на Народния театър и опера*. София, Държавна печатница, 1929, and checked in the *Central State Archive (ЦДА)*, ф. 177К.

Crispino e la comera	Luigi & Federico Ricci	September 19, 1891
Martha	Friedrich von Flotow	October 12, 1891
Aida	Giuseppe Verdi	November 17, 1891
Lucia di Lammermoor	Gaetano Donizetti	February 28, 1892
Hernani	Giuseppe Verdi	March 4, 1892
Das goldene Kreuz	Ignaz Brüll	April 6, 1892
V studni	Vilém Blodek	April 20, 1892
Cavaleria rusticana	Pietro Mascagni	May 15, 1892

Initially, the operas were performed on a piano, without choir or orchestra, in Czech, Russian and Italian, or in the three together. The first performance in Bulgarian was of Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, translated by Vladislav Shak, in July 1891. Soon, the piano was replaced by the orchestra of the Sixth Infantry Regiment plus amateur musicians, while a group of Italians, who had immigrated seeking work in Bulgaria after the Liberation, together with their families, formed a small operatic choir. Stage sets, stage clothes and musical scores were imported from Prague, where the mentioned Czech soloists also came from. Props were just brought by the performers.

By the summer of 1892, the Opera Section of the capital had started to look like an opera theater, of the kind established in other Balkan countries. Comments and assessments appeared in the press, not all of them favorable or polite, but with the ambition to depict that art form, new for the country. Meanwhile the National Assembly rejected pleas for new subsidies one after the other. The audience started to dwindle: some because they had too high expectations, others because their interest proved to be shallow and temporary. Thus, in September 1892, after staging as many as thirteen operas and nine fragment performances, the troupe disintegrated definitely. Still, it was in the 1890s, in Sofia, that the process "opera in Bulgaria" was initiated. The process was kept alive by tours of foreign singers and troupes, and by the development of the new lay choirs, which had turned into centers of opera culture. Two relevant choirs from the capital were *Rodna Pesen* (*Homeland Song*) and the *Jewish Singers' Society*; both appeared in the first decade of the 20th c.¹³

As to visiting performers, during that period the Italian troupes were the most numerous and toured the country most frequently. The troupes of F. Ugolini,

¹³ *Енциклопедия на българската музикална култура*. София, Изд. на БАН, 1967, с. 35.

Serio and Beloboni deserve to be mentioned, but the most important was the troupe of Egicio Massini. It remained long in Bulgaria, visiting almost all bigger towns, bringing to audiences many operas from the West European repertoire. As to singers from other countries, most of them came from Russia.

All these foreign guests were a basic factor in making the opera part of the cultural consciousness of Bulgarians and kept them *au courant* of opera fashions.

There were no steps taken to create a permanent national opera theater until 1907. In the spring of that year, from Russia came the singers Konstantin Mihaylov-Stoyan, Ivan Vulpe and Bogdana Gyuzeleva-Vulpe. Together with Dragomir Kazakov, they revived the idea of a permanent opera in Sofia. The circumstances were much more favorable, though. The dramatic theater had developed and become established thanks to the talent of its actors and to its repertoire. Besides, the Private Musical School and the Bulgarian Union of Musicians had been active for several years. Into the picture came also the successful solo concerts of Bulgarian instrumentalists, like Neda Filipova and Petko Naumov.

The opera initiative was publicized in a euphoric review by Konstantin Mihaylov-Stoyan of the end of year exam-concert of the Private Musical School, published in the daily *Den* on June 2, 1907. A few days later, the author and the Vulpes gave two highly successful concerts in Sofia. In August of the same year, acting on a decision of the Bulgarian Union of Musicians, Mihaylov-Stoyan sent to the Ministry of education a project for the establishment of a Bulgarian opera. The idea was that it should be in the capital, adding to the modern European look of Sofia. It is said there: "The Bulgarian opera shall acquire the significance of a peoples' national and educational institution."¹⁴ The proposal was that the opera be state subsidized, and perform on certain days of the week, designated by the Minister, in the Sofia Peoples' theater. According to the project author, a staff of at least fifty four was needed: two tenors, two baritones, two sopranos, two mezzo-sopranos, four comprimarios¹⁵, one prompter, a women's choir of twelve, a men's choir of twelve, one chapel master, one concert master, one choir master, one conductor, one junior conductor and a ballet of ten. That meant a staff no less in numbers than that of the Drama section of the Peoples' Theater¹⁶. Mihaylov-Stoyan expected that kind of administration and staff organization to result in an enhanced work *tempo*, more colorful interpretation, equality and independence

¹⁴ К. Михайлов-Стоян, *По въпроса за основаване българска народна опера*. София, 1907, с. 22.

¹⁵ A comprimario is a singer with a limited voice, used in supporting roles.

¹⁶ Михайлов-Стоян, *По въпроса за основаване българска народна опера*, с. 25.

of the music masters. It would also make possible to invite to Sofia and employ talented provincial and foreign musicians.

In a personal meeting with the Minister of peoples' education, Konstantin Mihaylov-Stoyan presented his opera project. Encouraged by the kind and considerate reception of the project, he went on an opera air-singing tour of Bulgaria. But while audiences everywhere met him with interest and impatience to learn whether there will soon be a Bulgarian opera, in the press critical articles and comments regarding the future of that initiative started to appear. Konstantin Mihaylov-Stoyan was targeted personally: he came from Bessarabia, so he was accused of not knowing the specificities of the situation in Bulgaria and Bulgarian cultural life. Misgivings were voiced that should a Bulgarian opera be opened, the public would start to frequent the opera only, and the theater would be left without an audience; thus, dramaturgy would be banished from Bulgarian cultural life. Simultaneously, it was contended that the opera would not be self-sustainable and would have to be subsidized from the state budget for dramatic art. As in the past, to the fore came fears that the creation of an opera, independent from the theater, would stifle Bulgarian playwriting. It was reasoned that to have a peoples' opera, there should first be more Bulgarian operatic opuses, so that the stage was not occupied exclusively by foreign stuff. Doubts were also voiced re the talent of Bulgarian operatic singers, their acting qualities and professionalism¹⁷.

What do these sharp reactions tell us? First of all, that the opponents of the idea of a Bulgarian opera had not been following the evolution of the art of music in the cultural life of the country. But that, of course, does not mean that there had not been a development, enough to be ground for an opera enterprise. On the other hand, the authors of that critical press (part of whom chose to be anonymous), were not of the musical world, nor were they specialists in art and culture. It is they that did not have the necessary qualifications and professionalism to be able to evaluate objectively the condition of professional Bulgarian music and its composers, interpreters and teachers.

As to the adherents of the idea to have an opera, they also published emotional pieces in the press. A *sui generis* war started between the pro-and contra-opera camps, which lasted more than a year on the pages of the newspapers *Grazhdanin*, *Den*, *Vecherna poshta*, *Tribuna*, etc.¹⁸

¹⁷ Казаков, *Материали по историята на Народния театър и опера*, с. 61-68.

¹⁸ Михайлов-Стоян, *По въпроса за основаване Българска народна опера*, с. 25-31.

Thus came the summer of 1908 when a number of well-known opera singers gathered in the capital: Dragomir Kazakov, Dimitar Popivanov, Katya Stoyanova, Mariya Vassileva, Stoyan Nikolov, Zlatka Kourteva and Zhelyo Minchev; the conductors Henrik Vizner, Todor Hadjiev and Dobri Hristov; the choirmaster Konstantin Ramadanov, and other musical persons who formed the Bulgarian Opera Association. On October 18th they gave a “test” performance, with fragments of *Faust* and *Rigoletto*. That was followed by opera shows with the band of the First Cavalry regiment and later with the orchestra of the Sixth Infantry Regiment. In the end of 1908, the amateur choir was replaced by a permanent opera choir. The first entire opera to be performed with a choir and orchestra, full-fledged for those times, was *Pagliacci* by Ruggero Leoncavallo (June 5, 1909)¹⁹.

The season 1910/1911 was special for the development of opera in Bulgaria. Until then all operas were sung in Russian and were picked from the repertoire in Russia and Western Europe. In 1910, on the suggestion of Mihaylov-Stoyan, the Association prepared and performed to great acclaim on the stage of *Slavyanska beseda* the first Bulgarian opera, *Siromahkinya* (*Poor woman*) by Emanuil Manolov. Heartened by that success, Bulgarian composers wrote several new operas, which were shown in subsequent seasons. Among them were *Kamen and Tsena* by Ivan Ivanov and Ventseslav (Vazlav) Kautski, *Tabirbegovitsa* (*Tahir beg's wife*) by Dimitar Hadjigheorghiev, and *Borislav* by Maestro Gheorghii Atanassov²⁰.

It may be seen as strange that during the 1920s it was the government of the Bulgarian Agrarian Peoples' Union that took the long-awaited step to adopt a law to transform the Bulgarian Opera Association into a Peoples' Opera, and the Musical School into a Musical Academy. “Nowhere else in the world the operatic art has been backed by the layers of the population that were represented in the Bulgarian government in 1921-1923, and whose interest they served. Aristocrats – yes. Urban intelligentsia – yes. But a party of land-tillers, not even of land-owners – never, ever!”²¹

The law of July 1921 stated that the Opera Association would be state-funded. From April 1922 it became a state institution under the name of Peoples'

¹⁹ *Енциклопедия на българската музикална култура*, с. 37.

²⁰ А. Христов, *Опера и съвременност*. София, Наука и изкуство, 1969, с. 49.

²¹ Бикс, *На опера в старата София*, с. 59.

Opera, and the opera staff was entitled to salaries and pensions. That ensured a comfortable basis for development, especially of a professional choir.

In this way, in the mid-1920s, the Peoples' Opera occupied its rightful place as cultural center for the inhabitants of the capital, commensurate with the Peoples' Theater and the Military Club. Of course, it was such a center for a chosen group, mostly for the elites of the capital and the country. In just a few years the Bulgarian capital could boast of having the basic artistic high schools of a modern European city: a Musical Academy and an Arts Academy, both state-subsidized. The result was that the Peoples' Opera was to be backed professionally by the first academically home-formed artists and musicians. That gave it the opportunity to stand up to the great opera centers of Europe and America, a topic that occupied the society chronicle of dailies almost daily.

Still, foreign guest performers were important for the indigenous development. From the establishment of the opera until the end of World War II, fourteen of the bigger opera troupes toured the whole country, while four just stopped in the capital. Ten of them came from Italy, three from Germany, two from pre-revolutionary Russia, two from France and one from Serbia.

In the first decades, the new Bulgarian opera was dominated by the Italian and Slavic schools; then, gradually the German and Austrian stage and singing culture took the lead. Among the later were *Die Königin von Saba* by Karl Goldmark (1935), *Oberon* by Karl Maria von Weber (1936), *Fidelio* by Ludwig van Beethoven, and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1942) and *Das Rheingold* (1943) by Richard Wagner. That array displays great variation in the choice of musical directions, but it is obvious that the predominating opuses required a large orchestra, a full-fledged choir, and mighty voices for the solo parties. That bespeaks a developed opera theater, armed with adequate artistic means and qualities that would enable it to do justice to the art²².

With time, the Peoples' Opera started to look like a good place for experiments, where everything and anything could be staged, provided certain aesthetic standards were observed. For example, it appears that of the historically important composers, the only one not represented was Claudio Monteverdi. All other composers, mainly of the Roman and Slavic, and largely the German and German-Austrian 19th c. were represented fully enough. The Bulgarian opera would even produce opuses that would normally be staged exclusively in their country of origin, being unpopular abroad.

²² Христов, *Опера и съвременност*, с. 91-95.

One of the most important components of the development of Bulgarian opera until the mid-twentieth century was the creation and staging of original Bulgarian operas. Until 1944 (the 9 September coup d'état), the Peoples' Opera had staged all operas by Maestro Gheorghi Atanassov, *Zhensko czarstvo* (*Women's kingdom*) and *Sallambo* by Vesselin Stoyanov, *Czar Kaloyan* (*King Kaloyan*) by Pancho Vladigherov, *Yaninite devet bratya* (*Yana's nine brothers*) by Lyubomir Pipkov, etc. Gradually, the Peoples' Opera became a solid proponent of the opera aesthetics, characteristic for Europe at the time, and introduced Bulgarian opuses. The prerequisites for progress were all there: strong soloists and directors, a choir and orchestra staffed by experienced professionals, and a critique and audience that were already educated and experienced enough to judge the operatic tradition, but also new and untasted art. Finally, in the 1940s Sofia had an opera, worthy of a modern European capital, for which the city had a need, a need of which it could take care.

Until the mid-20th c., the center of opera in Bulgaria was definitely the capital; still, there were some groups in the provinces that popularized it. Audiences in Rousse, for example, were probably the first in the country to experience opera theater, and not just opera music. Down the Danube the great West European operatic tradition would reach their city. In the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th c., most of the traveling opera companies would perform in Rousse.

From 1914 date the first local attempts at opera. The Opera Association of Rousse was founded, and in 1919, it performed the Bulgarian opera *Kamen and Tsena*²³.

Also of interest is the private Art Opera of Plovdiv, which performed the Bulgarian opera *Tahirbegovitsa* in 1920. In December of the same year the Varna Opera Association was formed, with Presiyan Dyukmedzhiev, which staged *Demon* (Anton Rubinshteyn) and *La traviata*. That group was active until 1924.

In May 1923, in Stara Zagora a permanent musical association was founded, under the name of a previous musical group, *Kaval*. Under the direction of Zlatan Stanchev and others, fragments and whole acts of *Faust* and *Carmen* were performed, and in 1925, the whole Bulgarian opera *Gherghana*. In 1928,

²³ Бикс, Р. *Български оперен театър извън столицата*. Дисертация за доктор на науките. ИИ, БАН, 1989, с. 67.

part of the singers in that association founded a separate troupe under the name of Regional Opera, directed by Dimitar Hristov (from the Sofia opera). Several performances later, it was renamed the South Bulgarian Regional Opera (1931). For fifteen years, it was active in Stara Zagora, and toured the country, too²⁴.

In the 1920s, attempts to organize permanent opera formations in the country intensified. In 1928, Presiyan Dyukmedzhiev founded another Varna group, which performed until September 1929 (fragments of *La traviata*). Again in Varna, from the end of 1929 to the end of 1931, the so-called Communal Opera was active, directed by Dyukmedzhiev, Stefan Makedonski and Alexander Krastev. They staged Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La traviata* and *Tsveta*. In comparison, the Opera Association of Rousse, founded as early as 1914, during the same period staged only one opera, *Gherghana* (1935), conducted by Atanas Strandzhev and with Boris Pintev as choirmaster²⁵.

There were other similar attempts in the provinces too. However, except in Stara Zagora, they were limited to having number of shows by different groupings, not united by a continuing artistic treatment. The core would consist of non-professional singers, who with their enthusiasm and love for the opera helped its popularization among a wider audience.

Production problems were being resolved rather primitively, due to bad material conditions, lack of permanent facilities, and insufficient qualification of the participants. The governing bodies were not interested in opera performance outside the capital. All that stopped amateur groups from becoming durable and significant artistic phenomena. Only in the capital, thanks to state subsidies, the performances of the Peoples' Opera showed a logical line of development.

It is only in the 1940s that the cause of professional opera became a priority for the bigger provincial cities. The Opera of Stara Zagora, the oldest outside the capital, opened its 1944/1945 season on October 28 with Gounod's *Faust*. Its premiere had been earlier, in March 1944; conductor was Romeo Raychev, director – Hristo Popov, and set designer – Petar Rouskov. In the spring of 1946, the Stara Zagora opera became the first provincial state-owned opera. Until then,

²⁴ М. Ценова, *Хорове и хормайстори в българския оперен театър: Градската хорова култура до средата на 40-те години на XX в. като предпоставка за възникване на музикални театри в България*. Докторска дисертация, ИИ, БАН, 2001, с. 87-89.

²⁵ *Енциклопедия на българската музикална култура*, с. 41.

in the 21 years of its existence, it had produced and performed eighteen operas in Stara Zagora and almost all bigger towns of Southern Bulgaria. Before the statification, there had been premieres of the following: *La traviata* (twice), *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Faust*²⁶.

The Varna Peoples' Opera was the first provincial opera to be inaugurated after the 9 September coup d'état (1944). Before it was opened in 1947, there had been several attempts, the first dating from 1920. The initiative was of the Varna chapter of the Fatherland Front organization. A good basis for it was the local State Symphonic Orchestra, established in 1946 and conducted by Rouslan Raychev, the Radio Varna choir and the *Sea sounds* choir. At the beginning, fifteen soloists were engaged through a competition; part of them remained the opera's main movers. After the official proclamation of August 1, 1947, the first opening night was of Bedřich Smetana's *Prodaná nevěsta* (September 10, 1947). Conductor was Rouslan Raychev, director – Petar Raychev, set designer – Assen Popov.

In a short time, the opera became an integral part of the cultural life of Varna, enjoying attention and care, and growing understanding on the part of the local audience. The specificity of the Varna opera resulted from the coastal position of the city, and the idea that as a “sea capital” and resort, the city had to exhibit the progress of national opera art, especially during the months of the traditional *Varna summer* international festival. That made the Varna opera different from other non-Sofia based operas, and could explain its characteristic traits and stages of development.

The fourth opera outside Sofia is the Plovdiv Peoples' Opera. It was founded by a state decision and opened with Smetana's *Prodaná nevěsta* on November 15, 1953. Conductor was Rouslan Raychev, director – Petar Raychev, set designer – Assen Popov. That happened ten years after the creation of the local symphonic orchestra and thirty-four years after the first attempt at organizing an opera theater²⁷.

Of special interest is the development of that opera's repertoire. It is not only a question of showing a “Bulgarian premiere”, or “seldom performed elsewhere” operas, for these criteria do not always guarantee a real artistic advance. In Plovdiv, thanks to a management that combined unity of purpose and continuity rarely found in practice, the opera was able to provide interesting and sensible work for

²⁶ Нейков, *Три десетилетия по българските музикални сцени*, с. 85.

²⁷ In the beginning of 1944, Alexander Kraev and Uli Poryazov organized a Plovdiv District Opera, which until the middle of 1945 gave several performances of *Gherghana* by Maestro Gheorghis Atanassov.

all the staff, revealing their potential as artists and performers. The local trademark was to introduce audiences to opuses that had not been domestically performed. Until the end of 1980, nineteen “unknown” operas, ballets and operettas had been staged, which made Plovdiv different from the capital and most provincial cities with their frequently repeated repertoire²⁸.

The opera of Bourgas had the longest history as an amateur undertaking. Several opera shows and fragments, performed before 1944, plus sporadic guest group appearances, interested the local public and around the middle of the 1950s a permanent troupe was formed, under the name of Bourgas Amateur Opera. Its members came from the then extant local State Symphonic Orchestra, the Peoples’ Choir and the *Rodna Pessen* (*Native Song*) choir; soloists were selected through a competition. The first opera to be produced was *La traviata*, with a premiere on June 25, 1955. It was conducted by Vassil Lolov, directed by Stefan Gadoulov, and Konstantin Dzhidrov was set designer. Until it became state-owned in 1972, a total of twenty-two operas, one ballet, eight operettas and one musical comedy were staged²⁹.

In 1970, an opera was started in Pleven as an “amateur state institution”. The performers were gathered from the state-owned local Symphonic orchestra, and the choir and dancers – from the state-owned Northern Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances. Soloists were picked through a state-run competition. The first opera shown was *Lud ghidiya* (*The crazy village musician*) by Parashkev Hadjiev; the opening night was on October 8, 1970.

In the first years of the Pleven opera, the well-known, Pleven-born opera singer Hristo Brambarov closely followed its development, giving hands-on help in dealing with artistic and administrative challenges. He personally led the vocal practice during the rehearsal periods. In the five years before the Pleven opera became an entirely state institution, eight operas were produced, one of which twice.

On January 1, 1975, it was declared that the Pleven Opera would become a state institution under Chief Directorate “Bulgarian Music” of the Committee for Art and Culture (Decision № 286 of the Council of Ministers). Its reorganization was to take place in two stages: stage one in 1975, stage two in 1976. After the death of Hristo Brambarov on April 12, 1975, the Pleven state opera assumed his name.

²⁸ Бикс, *Българският оперен театър*, с. 117.

²⁹ С. Михалева, *Първостроителите на Бургаската опера. Документална хроника 1920-1972*. София, НИБА-Консулт, 2017, с. 73.

The first production after the opera was taken over by the state was *Maystori* (*Master woodcarvers*) by Parashkev Hadjiev. From 1975 until the end of the season 1979/1980, another twenty-three works were staged: fourteen operas, eight ballets, and one operetta. Some of them were performed during the traditional Katya Popova Laureate Days, with the participation of singers who had received prizes in international competitions. In that five-year period, the opera was using the facility of the dramatic theater, built for a reading house in the late 19th c., and refurbished in 1962.

In Blagoevgrad, a troupe for chamber opera was started comparatively late, as there were no particular traditions in the city: in 1972, by director Plamen Kartalov and the composer Trifon Silyanovski, who acted as musical director. Originally it performed under the name *Opera for the Young*, and the singers were predominantly students; later it became, consecutively, *Chamber Opera for the Young* and *Young Opera for All*. Finally, it became officially established in Blagoevgrad as a state-owned chamber opera, which on December 26, 1977 started with Giovanni Pergolesi's opera buffa *La serva padrona*. Until June 1980, thirteen opuses were staged, most of them for the first time in Bulgaria.

The performers, as mentioned, were initially amateurs and students; later, alumni of the Vocalist's Faculty and the Master Classes of the State Conservatoire. Later, part of the initial troupe members passed on to state operas and operettas in other cities.

After chamber opera was established in Blagoevgrad, it retained its preference for smaller opuses, but added to its mission the task to familiarize people from the Pirin region with the opera and make it a cultural necessity. A permanent staff of soloists and an orchestra were formed, while the small choir comprised mainly local amateurs. Another goal was that Blagoevgrad should become an example to be followed by other larger Bulgarian cities in getting their own chamber operas.

The idea of having state operas came simultaneously with the idea of creating state symphony orchestras. In Bulgaria after the Liberation, there were active processes of democratization and decentralization of culture. Thus, the initiatives for local operas and symphony orchestras were a clear manifestation of

the modernization of urban societies³⁰. The idea to have opera theaters outside the capital was received with enthusiasm by the local population and realized with vigor and knowledge by the central state and public institutions. Regional pro-opera initiatives were started and enjoyed popularity. To have an opera in your hometown was seen as a sign of status and self-respect, of entering the circle of European cultural centers. Even if in places outside the capital musical events were relatively numerous, the creation of an opera theater was perceived as a new Revival, and a barometer of modernization in Bulgaria from the end of the 19th to the middle of the 20th c. But it was also more than that: a realized craving to catch up, to overcome provinciality, to have a full contact experience of the masterpieces of music, to have them whole and unabridged, on a scene, with a choir and orchestra, sets and costumes... And that after having for years heard only separate airs and ensembles, episodic choir and orchestra pieces and disparate acts, shown by local or guest talent.

The establishment of operas outside the capital was addressed with a clear vision of what is central for a beginning and what could jeopardize the prestige of the whole undertaking. Experienced artists of repute were directed towards prospective opera seats, artists with a nationally famous name or at least with good professional formation. That was a prerequisite for gaining the trust of the locals, as well as of the persons that would eventually become part of the opera staff. Work went on diligently and conscientiously, and directed so as to evade artistic compromises. The result was that the operas of Varna, Rousse and Plovdiv turned out to be so well conceptualized and constructed, that with the help of some additions in due course, their founders managed to maintain them in a state of continuous progress. Certain productions kept their high quality decades after their premiere, and others, throughout the whole period in question.

Moreover, the organizational structure would be chosen bearing in mind the specific conditions in each city; also the ways in which each opera functioned. At that time in Bulgaria there were not enough directors and set designers who would have received a special opera-based training. That was resolved by inviting specialists from Sofia Opera, who would get out to the province for certain periods or just to stage particular opuses. Conductors were engaged on a permanent basis and they were the ones who bore the main burden, with some help from younger colleagues without special training. Also permanently engaged were the soloists,

³⁰ Р. Даскалов, *Българското общество 1879-1939*, Т. 2. София, ИК Гутенберг, 2005, с. 158.

the choir masters, the choir or just its core group, the administration and the technical staff. The orchestra was usually the local symphonic orchestra. As a rule, in that initial period interdependence with the local dramatic theater was avoided, possibly due to memories of the difficult coexistence of the Drama and Opera in the capital.

As to repertoire, the opera theaters out of Sofia as a rule followed the politics of the capital. Opuses were selected according to their potential to be liked by a wider audience, simultaneously giving a chance to all performers to gain experience and qualification. In the first decade of their existence, none of the opera theaters would use the repertoire as a vehicle for reckless independence, for inimitability and differentiation from others. What was staged should help troupes in their growth; not repulse the public, and help the growth of its fledgling abilities; so that hopefully, one day modern operatic ideas could be offered and received well.

Thus, repertoire in those years would have operas of the second half of the 19th c., and would be organized around simple and clear directives: do only what is traditionally approved; have one (if possible, more) opera for each cast or type of voices; for lyrical and character voices, have at least one comical or chamber-type production per season (e.g. *Don Pasquale*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; a bit later, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Les pêcheurs de perles* – all these were staged practically everywhere); a “high society” operetta here and there; and, ubiquitously, the compulsory Verdi: *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, often with a heightened accent on social aspects. Indeed, a no-risk approach, for both interpreters and audience. Essentially, that was an accumulation of “stock” abilities, a basis for future development. Repetitions of the same chain of operas can be registered throughout the country, even occasionally the same opera would be produced twice in a single season. Small wonder, as it would be staged by the same director and set designer, and just adapted to local specificities. Everywhere, the touch of the same few Bulgarian directors and set designers was to be felt, in places all having rather an equal share (like in Rouse), in others in changing proportions, to a large extent dependent on the abilities of the soloists available.

Generally, until the mid-1950s (and in places even later), the tendency was centripetal: out-of-capital “opera workers” wanted whatever was produced in the capital, the approved, i.e. and already staged by the Peoples’ Opera of Sofia. The difference was mainly quantitative: the country had more stages and more performances. The sameness was in almost everything else. The four opera theaters, created in the country one after the other (Varna, Rouse, Plovdiv and Bourgas) replicated repertoires, playing similar or the same pieces treated in the same way by the same directors and set designers. The selection criteria were the same too:

locals would form the choir and the orchestra, soloists would be chosen after a competitive hearing by an expert commission.

For the first time, clear emancipatory gestures were to be registered towards the end of the 1950s. Repertoires would start to vary, aiming at distinction from the opera in Sofia. A tendency towards originality could be detected in the treatment of certain non-capital based productions³¹. There was then a general upswing in provincial opera, which brought it on a par with the opera of the capital, and occasionally to clear leadership. Due to various considerations and circumstances, Sofia did not present the Bulgarian and Soviet repertoire, actual at that time (opting for traditional West European stuff), which created a window of opportunity for provincial operas. That was aptly used by Rousse and Varna, plus, albeit to a lesser extent, by Plovdiv and Stara Zagora, to enrich their repertoire with never-played in Bulgaria or forgotten European opuses.

During that first period of the Bulgarian provincial opera, a remarkable generation of singers appeared. The Bulgarian public singled them out with its preference, based on a taste that had not changed much since Revivalist times. Bulgarians would not go for a colorless voice, no matter the virtuosity with which it may have been used. "A singer's got to have a voice!" That is, have a voice according to the age-old Bulgarian tradition: everybody sings, but the *singers* of the village or the church choir are known, for they are the ones that *have the voice*. Another circumstance is probably also at play here: Bulgarian opera singers had been formed predominantly by Italian singing, be it in schools in Italy or elsewhere in the world. In the course of time that produced a convergence of folk and professional criteria for judging an interpretation, and made the rich and beautiful voice a *conditio sine qua non*.

The development of Bulgarian opera in the 20th c. was significantly helped by the periodical National Reviews of the Opera, Operetta and Ballet. The first such was organized in 1951, the second in 1958, the third in 1962. In the discussion, following the performance of each troupe, and the judgments of the press of the capital, an overall evaluation of achievements and shortcomings would be given, to help in future work.

³¹ Христов, *Опера и съвременност*, с. 105.

In practice, until the second National Review (1958), and to an extent even the third (1962), provincial operas were seen as having just local significance. Their activities were seen as a valuable part of the cultural life of a particular city, along with the work of the local dramatic theater and symphonic orchestra, chamber performances and guest performances from the country or abroad. The art of provincial operas would become more visible during tours, which did not happen often, but were decisive for evaluation and movement of cadres. It was after guest appearances that the best were offered places in the Sofia Opera, while the provincial troupe in question would replenish its stock with new and young singers and musicians.

At the second National review of 1958, the first signs of differentiation surfaced. In some provincial performances, a drive for self-assertion both in the repertoire and the approach to direction could be detected. Still, in the provinces predominated the unresolved problems with the orchestra (since it would be the local symphonic orchestra, and not the opera's own); with set designers (a problem, ubiquitous for almost all provincial operas, all the time) and even with choirs (albeit, together with their choir masters, they formed the core of the local opera and were valued accordingly). An innovation were the guest groups, invited for a particular staging; overtime, that would result in fruitful artistic cooperation.

That was the situation preceding the third National Review (1962), the results of which demonstrated the emancipation of out-of-capital opera: certain provincial productions were heralded as a national (and not only regional) achievement. Then, until the mid-1970s, a prolonged "balance of powers" period ensued. During that time, the search for new discoveries gradually grew, especially in contemporary repertoire, and in that the capital started to lag behind. For the first time in Bulgaria were produced certain operas by Dmitriy Shostakovich, Richard Wagner, Leoš Janáček, Gian Carlo Menotti, etc.

The third National Review showed that provincial opera in Bulgaria had lost its provinciality, had passed its age of education and reached professionalism. There were ongoing improvements regarding its both artistry and material basis, leading to unquestionable progress.

The role that of extra-capital operas played was to solidify the fledgling Bulgarian opera and to position the best domestic opuses in the cultural heritage. During the whole period in question the new Bulgarian operas were being staged (with small exceptions) first outside Sofia. Examples here would be *Antigona 43* by Lyubomir Pipkov (first staged in Rousse and Plovdiv) and *Yuda (Judas)* by Krassimir Kyurkchiyski; also opuses by Marin Goleminov, Ivan Dimov, Dimitar Hristov, Bozhidar Spassov, etc. The quality of provincial productions in its turn

stimulated the creation of new operas, and helped their success on the stage of the Peoples' Opera and the Musical Theater of Sofia.

It could be said in conclusion that the establishment of opera theaters was significant for the modernization of Bulgarian cities after the Liberation. For Bulgaria, opera houses were not just buildings on the architectural map: they had specific cultural functions. Firstly, they were important nationally, insofar as they were part of the creation of a national culture, and of the education of the people by the intelligentsia in becoming a nation. Secondly, they were places of prestige, evidence that the country was inhabited by a "people of culture", belonging to a nation capable of high culture creation.

That is why after the Liberation, the question was how to raise Bulgarian musical culture to European level; to master the specificity of the opera art form; to achieve a high synthesis of modern approach, modern musical language, modern judgment of the phenomena from the past and present, of which an opera would narrate, and all that via contemporary technique and media. Truly, in the fields of symphonic and chamber music, in vocal and choir art, Bulgarian music went relatively faster in closing the gap with European countries, with their age old traditions. Opera writing went more slowly, due mainly to modest creative experience in the endeavor to establish a contemporary national style.

In any case, in the context of overall modernization, Bulgarians opted for an opera (at least insofar as we are talking about the art of the musical scene) that would focus not on the attractive, the entertaining and the spectacular, but on what was near to their idea of good behavior in the context of patriarchy. People asked of the opera a "sentimental education", a nobility of feeling, and also a heightened social prestige. The opera was seen as something that should soften behavior, and not just fill one's leisure time. In supplying that demand, opera, with its sweet music and high morality, with its highly understandable happenings, heroines and heroes, historically played the role of a *sui generis* Trojan horse in the penetration of the modern European musical tradition in Bulgaria.

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Alexandra Milanova

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
alexandra.milanova@balkanstudies.bg*

BACKSTAGE THEATER¹

Valeria Fol

Abstract: *This is a comment on some documents of historic interest from the personal archive of Nikolay Fol, Director of the Varna People's Theater in 1943 – 1944. It tells of the evacuation of the theatre, its modus operandi, the way such a cultural institution was administered during World War II, the atmosphere in the theatre and the city of Varna at that time, the transformation of the theatre into a symbol of modernization and Europeanization of the city and village, as well as of the spirit of intellectuals and artists in that situation of crisis.*

Keywords: *Theater, Varna People's Theater, World War II, Nikolay Fol*

I was urged by the title of the conference, namely “The Balkan city: spaces, images, memory” and an article by Prof. Yoana Spassova-Dikova², to put into academic circulation some documents to do with the Varna theater during World War II, hitherto kept in the family archive. I have placed digital copies of these documents at the disposal of the Prof. Alexander Fol Archive at the New Bulgarian University³.

¹ This work was supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science under *Cultural Heritage, National Memory and Social Development* National Research Program approved by DCM No 577 of 17 August 2018.

² Й. Спасова-Дикова, Добрият и мъдър кентавър Фόλος, *Thracia XXIV. ЕΠΟΠΤΕΙΑ. Сборник в чест на 85-годишнината от рождението на проф. д.н. Александър Фол*. София, ИБЦТ-БАН, 2019, с. 29-45.

³ „Моят театър 1942-43”. Албум от колажи, съставен от Христо Динев, Дигитално копие, 40 л.: УА-НБУ, ф. 8, оп. 1, вр. № 314. See also „Народен театър Варна – Втори сезон – Държавен театър 1943/1944” – отчет на директора Николай Фол за дейността на театъра през изтеклия сезон. Дигитално копие. Печатно. 6 л., УА-НБУ, ф. 8, оп. 1, вр. № 315.

During World War II, Nikolay Fol worked as a director at the Varna Theater, and simultaneously as the Director of the theater. The theater of Varna had been established in 1921 as a municipal professional theater, and in 1942 it was made into a state-owned theater. In the Fol family archive, there is an album of comical *collages*, illustrating produced plays, plus a Director's report on the second season of the theater as state institution. From the relevant press we could gather information on the qualities of directing, set design and music of the plays staged, as well as on the actors' performance; what we could not get is a sense of the functioning and the atmosphere in the theater in the context of World War II. That kind of information, however, we could gather from the Director's report and the *collages* mentioned. So, I have entitled this short text *Backstage Theater*, as if in dialogue with Nikolay Fol's book *Entr'acte Theater*⁴.

What can we learn from the Director's report for 1943-1944, a time of war and bombardments? Theater life during a war gives some insight not only into the cultural atmosphere of the city of Varna, but, as we are going to see, of the surrounding villages too. I shall consider only some of the aspects, with the hope that the archive materials that can now be accessed would enrich the sources on urban and relevant rural cultural life, on the theater as a symbol of modernization in the 1940s, the modes of administration of cultural institutions, and, last but not least, the spirit of artists and intellectuals in a situation of crisis.

On October 7, 1943 the second Hall of the state theater of Varna was solemnly inaugurated with a holy water rite. Then, in mid-season, the theater was evacuated to the village of Dolni Chiflik because of the bombardments.⁵ In order to go on functioning, the theater was reorganized into a traveling theater and divided into two companies with different repertoire. At the time, the total staff comprised nineteen actors, eleven actresses, and four female and one male interns. As the season went on, some of the actors were drafted.⁶ At that time, productions needed music, so composer Svetoslav Obretenov was contracted as a permanent musical director; he would write the necessary music and conduct the orchestra whenever musical illustrations were called for. Due to various difficulties, sets and costumes for that season had to be obtained by making alterations to the ones produced for the previous season; that was done by Nikolay Fol, artists Vlasi Lingorski and Stancho Stanchev, and actor and director Stefan Gadoularov. It was habitual to invite external artists for that kind of work, but that time it was

⁴ Фол, *Театър в антрактите*.

⁵ УА-НБУ, ф. 8, оп. 1, вр. № 315: 3, 11.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 8-9.

not done, as outsiders would not be familiar with the “row material”⁷ The report also informs, giving names and particulars, re the new tasks allotted to actors in the conditions of evacuation. The household problems addressed were chiefly in connection with the necessity to secure the theater’s possessions, especially after it was evacuated to Dolni Chiflic. It is also mentioned that the steam heating system for the scene was repaired, so that actors would be warm enough while playing on village tours.

Immediately following the bombing of Sofia of January 10, 1944, Lieutenant General Nikola Hristov, commander of the Third Army, ordered the theater’s evacuation. It is interesting how it went and what infrastructure was provided. Director Fol wrote a detailed plan for the functioning of the theater during evacuation. That plan was endorsed by the Minister of peoples’ education and also by the Varna authorities. The evacuation began on January 21 and ended on February 1, when the whole staff was assembled in the village of Dolen Chiflik. The plan enumerates the ways and means of transporting the theater’s belongings to that village, 40 km away. There, the theater was provided with large halls to be used for rehearsals, ateliers, storerooms, a kitchen and canteen, living quarters, etc., in the local agricultural school, the secondary school and the local administration facilities⁸. Already on February 2, rehearsals were restarted, and on February 20 the two companies went on the road in Northern Bulgaria, with sets specially tailored to fit small stages. In March the two groups were united in Varna for two premieres, and from April on, continued their tours, this time in Northern and Southern Bulgaria. And even when the Director was mobilized and briefly away from the theater, the two companies continued performances under the direction of company members, authorized by the Ministry of peoples’ education⁹. At first glance these details might appear minute, but they point at an adequate functioning of state and cultural institutions

In the Report special attention is paid to the repertoire of the two companies. The plays are listed by name, performances and audiences are counted, and separate box office amounts are given. For each performance there is a statement re its reception by the audience. During that season, the theater had ten premieres, plus one for children, restored six plays, and also staged ten extra-repertoire productions. In the repertoire were theatrical classics of the period and Bulgarian

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 9.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 11.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 12.

plays: Ibsen's *Nora*¹⁰, *The Golden Riverbank*¹¹ by Richard Billinger, the social comedy „*Miss Dr.*” (“*Dr. Szabo Yuci*”) by László Fodor¹², *The Concert* by Hermann Bahr, *River Ilieva* by Stoyan Zagorčinov, *Borislav* by Ivan Vazov, etc. The report draws attention to the play *It Happened in America* by Henry Torrès¹³, claiming that it won the acclaim of audiences and the press, but was banned from the stage after its thirteenth performance, “after a misunderstanding with the administrative authorities”.¹⁴ Compared to the preceding season, the number of tickets sold and box office money were nearly doubled. It is noted in the report, though, that the

¹⁰ Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* here is referred to as *Nora*. At the time, copyright laws were not observed strictly, so both names were in use on the Bulgarian stage.

¹¹ None of the known plays by Richard Billinger bear that name. However, in 1937 appeared his very successful play *Der Gigant*, (*The Giant*), and on its basis he co-authored a screenplay for the 1942 film *Die goldene Stadt* (*The Golden City*). Thus, a plausible conjecture would be that the play in question was *The Giant*. Probably just another renaming: the “golden” part of the Bulgarian name *The Golden Riverbank* might have come from the title of the German film; and the „riverbank“ part may have been suggested by the plot: a Sudeten peasant girl is lured to follow a riverbank and ends in “the Golden city of Prague“, where she is abused by a Czech, jumps into the river, and drowns!

¹² The premiere of a play by László Fodor called *Dr. Szabo Yuci* took place in January 1926 at the Hungarian Theater of Budapest. See, e.g., the weekly *Kecskeméti Színház és Mozi*, (*Theater and Film*, Kecskemet, March 20, 1926, p. 7, at: http://misc.bibl.u-szeged.hu/21769/1/kecskemeti_szinhaz_mozi_1926_003_012.pdf - 27.07.2020.

¹³ The Frenchman Henry Torrès did not write a play with that name. But he did translate from the American into French (and possibly adapt) *The Trial of Mary Dugan*, a play by the American Bayard Veiller. Apparently on that basis, French sources would cite Torrès as author, admitting that his play “followed” the American play. Without doubt, that was the play performed under the Bulgarian name *It Happened In America*; whether it was translated into Bulgarian from the American original or from the French adaptation is hard to determine with certainty (though probably it was the latter), as there might have been political reasons for masking the American origin of the play.

¹⁴ Recalling those times, my mother-in-law Vera Boyadzhieva-Fol told me that the play in question had indeed been banned from the stage by the authorities on political grounds. The word “America” was then a very political word indeed. It is quite probable that it is just that word in the Bulgarian title of the play that caused its extraordinary popularity, despite the fact that the play itself was critical of American society. Besides, it is probably that criticism which provoked Henry Torrès, a left liberal, to translate it in the first place. Vera Boyadzhieva-Fol is a reliable witness: all the time of the Varna Theater's evacuation she was with her husband, actively participating in his theater's work, and on tours played the music required for the stage on the family piano.

bigger profits were due not only to more spectators, but also to the higher price of tickets¹⁵.

The theater's activities were not limited to the production and performance of plays. The aim was to make it a "real center of spiritual life". In the report it is stressed that such activities in 1943/1944 could not match pre-evacuation achievements, but the troupe still managed several extra-repertoire shows: a Yavorov matinee, with a lecture, after which the actors presented an *ad hoc* prepared sequence of poetry and music; a concert by Dimitar Nenov and another, by the chamber orchestra of Cologne; also a matinee of mourning, for King Boris III, with poetry and prose, on the 40th day after his death. The last event drew such a multitude that not only the theater Hall was full, but also the corridors and foyers, so loudspeakers had to be installed. Six months after the king's death, another three mourning matinees were performed: in Varna and in the villages of Dolni Chiflik and Osman.

In the spirit of the Director's idea that the theater should become "a real center of spiritual life", a Museum of the Theater was established, and the official order for its creation was widely communicated by the press. Due to the evacuation, the exhibits and stock collected were not systematized, but in any case that was the first theatrical museum in Bulgaria. From an *ad hoc* fund, made by pooling money from the theater's budget and a collection among the actors, a theater library was established, and more than a hundred volumes about art were bought, along with subscriptions for domestic and foreign theatrical periodicals, plus the daily press. A special reading room was appointed. It soon became "a common room where actors would socialize and also get a rest during rehearsals and performances"¹⁶.

The report on the activity of the theater in its capacity as a state cultural institution in its second season clearly shows the efforts made to make world samples of theatrical art available to the Bulgarian audience and to perform plays of Bulgarian authors on an equal footing. The policy to educate the future audience of the theater through performances for children and to include the village in the urban culture is clearly formulated and implemented. Despite the wartime conditions, the Varna Theater was gradually becoming a spiritual center not only through the poster of the performances it gave, but also through the library and the museum it established.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 3-6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.

The album is a good illustration of the artistic atmosphere of that theater, loaded with humor and positive energy, despite wartime difficulties¹⁷.

The report and album in question shall be published in full in the Bulgarian version of this text. I hope that the presented documents shall help in filling some blanks in the theatrical history of Varna during the hard days of World War II, and be also of service to researchers in the history of the towns of Bulgaria, and of its villages *ditto*.



*“My theater 1942-43” – album of collages, “hashed and put together”
by Hristo Dinev; it illustrated the program of the Varna Peoples’ Theater
when Nikolay Fol was its Director*

¹⁷ УА-НБУ, ф. 8, оп. 1, вр. №314.

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Valeria Fol

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,
University of Library Studies and Information Technologies
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
valeria.fol@balkanstudies.bg*

**THE BULGARIAN ECONOMIC ELITE
IN PLOVDIV IN THE 19th CENTURY
(SOCIAL AND PROPERTY PROFILE OF A PLOVDIV FAMILY)**

Maria Levkova-Muchinova

Abstract: *The article presents the characteristics of the social and property profile of the Bulgarian economic elite in Plovdiv in the 19th century, seen throughout the history of a wealthy family – the Chalakovs. Various archival sources, documents of local self-government, personal and economic correspondence keep information about the rise of the Chalakovs and a number of other Plovdiv Bulgarian families, who have taken their place among the city’s economic and social elite, the local “notables”. The specifics of their economic activity and their property status, as important elements of their socio-professional portrait, are outlined in an article. The role of the Chalakovs and a number of other wealthy and influential Bulgarian families in the economic and social life of the city of Plovdiv in the nineteenth century is also analyzed in the study.*

Keywords: *Economic History, Bulgarian National Revival, Social Development, Economic Elite*

The social transformations in the Bulgarian society and the construction of a Bulgarian urban economic and cultural elite during the era of our national Revival are issues that have aroused a considerable historiographical interest¹. In this respect, Plovdiv’s history offers numerous

¹ On this topic, see Н. Тодоров, *Балканският град XV – XIX век. Социално-икономическо и демографско развитие*. София, Наука и изкуство, 1972; В. Паскалева, *Развитие на градското стопанство и генезисът на българската буржоазия през XVIII в.*, В: *Паисий Хилендарски и неговата епоха*, София, Изд. на БАН, 1962, с. 71-129; В. Паскалева, *Българската възрожденска буржоазия и Освобождението, Исторически*

examples of involvement and establishment of the Bulgarians in the local and the imperial economy, of breaking the traditional social structure and formation of an economic elite, composed of wholesalers and entrepreneurs². This text, which traces the emergence and establishment of a Bulgarian economic class in the big Thracian city through the history of an affluent and influential Bulgarian family – the Chalakovs, is relevant to the issues mentioned³. The rich family archive preserved⁴ allows the reconstruction of significant aspects of the property and social profile of this prominent Plovdiv family from the 19th century as an interesting example of the genesis of the Bulgarian economic elite during the Revival period.

преглед, 1977, N 5-6, с. 68-89; Цв. Георгиева, За генезиса на буржоазните елементи в социалната структура на българите, *Исторически преглед*, 1977, N 2, с. 87-90; М. Тодорова, Личното счетоводство на българите през XIX в. – епизод от формирането на буржоазния манталитет на българина, *Балканика*, 1986, с. 119-133; Св. Янева, *Българи – откупвачи на данъци във фискалната система на Османската империя. Към историята на българския делови и социален елит през XIX в.* София, НБУ, 2011; Н. Манолова, Възрожденският търговец – примери за стопанското му и обществено поведение от деветнадесети век, *Минало*, 1995, N 3, с. 42-48.

² See Н. Генчев, *Възрожденският Пловдив (Принос в българското духовно Възраждане)*. Пловдив, Изд. „Христо Г. Данов”, 1981.

³ About the Chalakovs, see Й. Груев, Спомен за Чалъковци, *Български преглед*, Год. VIII, 1896, кн. III; Н. Еничерев, *Възпоменания и бележки*. София, 1906; П. Карапетров, *Сбирка от статии*. Средец, книж. Детска градина, 1898; К. Моравенов, *Паметник на Пловдивското население в града и за общите заведения по произносно предание: Подарен на Българското читалище в Цариград 1869*. Съст. В. Тилева, Здр. Нонева. Пловдив, Хр. Г. Данов, 1984; П. Дорев, Българи – стопански дейци. Неделю Чалъкоглу от прочутото семейство Чалъковци, Копривщица – Пловдив, главен комисар за продоволствуването на Цариград с месо, износ на овце и пр. (Из турските държавни архиви), *Зора*. N 3443, 22 дек. 1930; Хр. Кесяков, Пловдивските първенци Чалъковци. Дарения и заслуги. Пловдив, 1932; Хр. Кесяков, *Вълко и Стоян Тодорови Чалъкови*. Потекло, живот и дейност, Пловдив, Пловдивска община, 1935; НА-БАН, сб. IV, а. е. 35 (Ив. Кепов, *Живот и дейност на Чалъковци и тяхното потомство* (Родословно изследване). София, 1935 (машинопис); М. Стоянов, Чалъковци (Към историята на един чорбаджийски род), *Исторически преглед*, 1950-1951, X 3, с. 313-329; М. Левкова-Мучинова, *Родът Чалъковци през Възраждането*. Дисертация. София, 2012, etc.

⁴ Preserved in the *Bulgarian Historical Archive (BHA)* with the National Library St St Cyril and Methodius - Sofia and People's Library Ivan Vazov (PLIV) – Plovdiv, in the *Scientific Archive (SA)* with BAS and the *Archive of the Institute for Historic Research with BAS*, in the *Central State Archive (CSA)* in Sofia and the *Department Territorial Archive – Plovdiv* with the Regional Directorate of Archives – Plovdiv.

The Chalakovs family history is related to Plovdiv towards the beginning of the 19th century. At that time Plovdiv was one of the biggest cities in the European part of the Ottoman Empire. Its multiethnic population was composed of Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, Armenians and Jews⁵. The city attracted new settlers with the security, protection and greater economic opportunities it offered as an important administrative, production and trade centre, where representatives of the Ottoman provincial authorities resided, a considerable number of crafts shops, trade companies and offices functioned and bustling trade prospered⁶.

Expelled by the Kurdzhalii raids over their native Koprivshitsa, the Chalakovs transferred to Plovdiv not only their experience of hereditary *celep* (suppliers of small cattle for the needs of the capital city and the army) and some capital⁷,

⁵ There is no consensus in literature about the exact figure for the population of Plovdiv in the first half of the 19th c. In the works of Bulgarian and foreign authors, the data shown is quite different, varying between 30,000 and 100,000 people. In the contemporary literature the prevailing view is that the numbers of the population of Plovdiv in the first half of the 19c. were approximately between 30,000 and 40,000: Генчев, *Възрожденският Пловдив*, с. 66; Щ. Щерионов, Демографски измерения на гръцкото етническо присъствие в Пловдив през Възраждането, В: *Солун и Пловдив и тяхното успоредно историческо, културно и обществено развитие (XVIII–XX век)*. Солун, 2000, с. 139–163; Щ. Щерионов, *Гърците в българските земи през XVIII–XIX век (до 1878 г.)*. Историко-демографска характеристика. В. Търново, Фабер, 2008, с. 147–165; В. Мучинов, *Демографско развитие на Пловдивския санджак през XIX век (до 1878 г.)*. Дисертация. София, 2009, с. 66–71. See also K. M. Αποστολίδης, *Η της Φιλίππουπόλεως ιστορία από των αρχαιοτάτων μέχρι των καθ' ημάς χρόνων*, Αθήνα, 1959; Α Λυμπεράτος, *Οικονομία, πολιτική και εθνική ιδεολογία. Η διαμόρφωση των εθνικών κομμάτων στη Φιλίππούπολη του 19^{ου} αιώνα*. Ηράκλειο, Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης, 2009; Α. Λιбератос, *Възрожденският Пловдив: трансформация, хегемония, национализъм*. София, ИК „Гутенберг“, 2020.

⁶ Генчев, *Възрожденският Пловдив*, с. 42, 55.

⁷ In this period, it was only the livestock trade in the field of government livestock supplies (*celepkeşan* trade), a traditional livelihood for the residents of mountainous Koprivshitsa that allowed accumulation of trade capital and forming the social layer of active and affluent Bulgarian “cattle breeding aristocracy”. See Й. Груев, *Моите спомени*, Притурка на сп. „Училищен преглед”. Пловдив, 1906, с. 9; А. Нейчев, Джелепи и бегликчи, В: *Юбилеен сборник по миналото на Копривицица, 20 април 1876 – 20 април 1926*, Събр. и наред. архим. Евтимий, Т. I. София, Копривщенско д-во 20 април 1876 г., 1926, с. 525–526; Хр. Гандев, *Проблеми на Българското Възраждане*. София, Наука и изкуство, 1976, с. 183–184; Георгиева, *За генезиса на буржоазните елементи*, с. 89; Е. Грозданова, Ст. Андреев, *Джелепкешаните в българските и съседните им земи през XVI – XVIII век. По документи от наши и чужди архиви*. София, НБКМ, 1998, с. 180–

but also their confidence of an affluent and influential family, with acquaintances and connections in the local and central Ottoman administration⁸. In Plovdiv, the descendants of the Koprivshitsa man Hadji Valko the Pilgrim⁹ found conditions for economic activities but also faced the challenge of breaking the monopoly of the Greek “archon” families and the Turkish entrepreneurs in the local economy. The involvement of the Chalakovs in the sphere of tax farming, mostly tithes on small cattle (*ondalık* or *beğlik*)¹⁰, which is dated to those times, marks the beginning of their long-term successful business.

The story of the successful participation of the Chalakovs in the tax-farming system for more than several decades has aroused the interest of historians and economists as part of the process of the formation and economic ascend of the stratum of wealthy Bulgarian merchants and entrepreneurs within the frames of the internal imperial economy.

The involvement of the family with the tax-farming system *iltizam* is related to the capitals they had already accumulated, their positions in the city government of Plovdiv and the much-needed connections with authoritative representatives of the local and central Ottoman administration and with influential *sarafs*

181, 193-194; A. Lyberatos, Men of the Sultan: The Beğlik Sheep Tax Collection System and the Rise of a Bulgarian National Bourgeoisie in Nineteenth-Century Plovdiv, *Turkish Historical Review*, 2010, N 1, p. 58-59.

⁸ Contacts with the high-ranking officials from the palace elite are essential for the economic rise of the Chalakovs and their firm and lasting establishment in the imperial economy. Data exists that during the years of their greatest economic ascent the Chalakovs enjoy the favour of the palace itself. According to some semi-legendary information, Stoyan Chalakov and his brother Valko were received personally by the Ottoman Sultan Murad II; they enjoyed the favour of the Grand Vizier and Minister of Finance Nedim paşa. This provided them the assignment of quite profitable enterprises and ascent to the undisputed positions of chief *beğlikçi*. See Кепов, *Живот и дейност на Чалъковци*, л. 48-49, 124-126.

⁹ The father of the Chalakovs. About him see К. Мирчева, Чалъкови, В: *Кой кой е сред българите XV-XIX век*. София, ИК Аноубис, 2000, с. 290; Левкова-Мучинова, *Родът Чалъковци през Възраждането*, с. 44-46.

¹⁰ The involvement of the Chalakovs in the sphere of tax farming system *iltizam* probably dates back to the beginning of the 19th century. They started first as sub-buyers of *celep* taxes from the official entrepreneurs – Turks and Greeks, and established themselves firmly as buyers in the late 1820s, after the tithe on small cattle was introduced. Introduced as part of the reform policy of the Ottoman government, tithing was regularly ceded by the state to buyers, among whom, under the more liberal economic and domestic political conditions, proclaimed by the Tanzimat, Bulgarian buyers appeared officially in the sphere of tax-farming. See Янева, *Българи – откупвачи на данъци*, с. 49.

and merchants. Among the circumstances that favoured the success and ascent of the Chalakovs in those years, the elimination of their main competitors in the buy-out of the *beğlik* plays an important role¹¹. The traditional favour of the palace, bestowed to the Chalakovs as *celep* and established suppliers of live cattle to the Sultan's capital is also of considerable importance.

In the course of several decades (until the 1860s) the Chalakovs took part in buying the *beğlik* and other state revenue sources¹², building a well-organised system of collecting and transporting the small cattle to the capital, Edirne and other large consumer centres of the Ottoman Empire. The *beğlikçi defters*, fragments of the personal correspondence of the Chalakovs, accounting statements, prepared by the *Defterhanne* (the Ministry of Finance) and other documents of private or official nature, preserved in the family archive, reveal essential parts of their economic activities. In different years the family had bought and organised the collection of *ondalık* by their employees from different fiscal sections of the four tax areas in the Rumeli provinces of the empire: Bahar, Vradja, Samokov and Enishehir. The scope of the first wing included the whole Thrace, of the second – the northern Bulgarian lands, of the third – Western Bulgaria together with North and Central Macedonia, and of the fourth – South Macedonia with Albania and Thessaly¹³.

¹¹ During the Greek revolution, for example, the Koprivshitsa man Hadji Stanyo, labeled by some authors the first Bulgarian buyer of *beğlik*, was executed in Edirne together with his family on suspicion of being involved in the Greek revolutionary organisation Filiki Eteria (Society of Friends), while in the subsequent Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829, another competitor of the Chalakovs – Nikola Pochekov, lost all his herds and went bankrupt. See Груев, *Моите спомени*, с. 9-10; Ил. Тодев, Българско национално движение в Тракия 1800-1878. София, Акад. изд. „Проф. Марин Дринов“, 1994, с. 51, 91-92; Ил. Тодев, *Д-р Стоян Чомаков (1819-1893). Живот, дело, потомци*. Ч. 1: Изследване. София, АИ „Проф. М. Дринов“, 2003, с. 68.

¹² The subject of buying was mainly the tithe on the small cattle (*ondalık* or *beğlik*), although through some years, the family also bought other revenue sources like the tithe on the agricultural production (*öşür*), on the timber, the fruit trees, etc. Янева, *Българи – откупвачи на данъци*, с. 61-62.

¹³ Груев, *Моите спомени*, с. 9-10. More on the Chalakovs' participation in buying taxes see М. Левкова-Мучинова, По пътеките на беглика (из стопанските практики на Чалковия род), В: *Проучвания по стопанска история и история на социално-икономическата сфера в Югозападна България*. Сборник с материали от семинар, проведен на 14 октомври 2015 г. в УЦ „Бачиново“ на ЮЗУ „Неофит Рилски“. Благоевград, УИ „Неофит Рилски“, 2015, с. 216–229.

Among the most profitable business practices of the Chalakovs *beğlikçi* are the good knowledge of the specifics of livestock trade, the construction of a widely branched network connecting buyers, sub-buyers and creditors, representatives of the local economic elite, the orthodox clergy and the local Ottoman administration¹⁴. Among the factors, contributing to their successful economic activities, the researchers mention also their considerable economic experience, the selection of good employees and their adaptability to the changes in the tax policy of the Ottoman state¹⁵. To these factors can be added the knowledge and assessment of the specific natural, geographic, economic and ethno-demographic situation in the separate areas, essential in the survey of the purchased territories, the contacts with the local population and hiring of work hands, proof of which can be found in the Chalakovs' correspondence. The letters exchanged between the partners demonstrated good knowledge of the specific conditions for the development of cattle breeding in the purchased areas, on which the success of the partners depended on. Part of the expenses, written in the *beğlikçi defters* of the Chalakovs, also constitute the sums for tips and "*hedeliks*" (gifts), used to buy the favours of palace dignitaries and employees in the capital and provincial administration¹⁶.

We also judge the scope of the economic activities of the Chalakovs by the data on the hired employees and the size of their remunerations. During the seasonal campaigns of livestock inventory, collection and transportation to the Ottoman capital, employees with different functions were engaged during different years – *sayacı, kahyas* (sheperds), *odacı, sürücü, saya yoldaşları*, shearers, guards, etc., hired by the established cattle breeding settlements in Sredna gora and the Balkan mountain ranges – Koprivshitsa, Panagyurishte, Klisura, Kotel and others¹⁷. During the period between the 1820ies and the late 1840ies, depending on the size of the tax areas repurchased, the Chalakovs hired between 300 and 700 people for collecting the *beğlik*, paying them a wage of 150 to 600 *kuruş*, accord-

¹⁴ Lyberatos, *Men of the Sultan*, p. 74.

¹⁵ See Св. Янева, *Нови данни за стопански и фискални практики в българските земи и на Балканите през 30-те години на 19 век от архивите на Салчо Чомаков и Георги Стоянович Чалъков*, В: *Sine ira et studio. Изследвания в памет на проф. Зина Маркова*. София, АИ „Проф. Марин Дринов”, 2010, с. 456.

¹⁶ According to some authors, Chorbadji Valko was the first Bulgarian after Stefan Bogoridi, received by Sultan Mahmud II and having won his favour: Карапетров, *Сбирка от статии*, с. 260. See also Кепов, *Живот и дейност на Чалъковци*, л. 48-49.

¹⁷ Стоянов, *Чалъковци*, с. 315-316.

ing to their service¹⁸. Thus, they provided permanent or seasonal employment for the residents of many settlements in Sredna gora and Stara planina (the Balkan mountain range)¹⁹.

As a result of the above-mentioned circumstances, during the 1830s and the 1840s, the Chalakovs had already established themselves as part of the Ottoman economy and a factor in the social life of the Christian orthodox community in Plovdiv. Some of the most significant campaigns of that period were realized by Stoyan Chalakov ("Big Stoyan")²⁰. According to some documents preserved, in 1837-1839, for example, Chorbadji Stoyan, in partnership with some relatives, repurchased the right on the tithe of small cattle in the Salonica region, collecting in kind contributions to the amount of 56,319 sheep and goats and monetary equivalent (48,878 heads of cattle at 808,867 *kuruş*)²¹. More or less at the same time (in 1838-1839) He and his partners repurchased the right on the tithe of sheep and goats in Vratsa and Dobrudja²². The partnership realized revenues in kind and money of total value 170,804 *kuruş*, with costs to the amount of 41,730 *kuruş*²³.

Stoyan Chalakov carried out a particularly large business deal in 1846, repurchasing collection of *ondalık* from the four fiscal regions in the European part of the Ottoman Empire – Bahar, Vradja, Samokov and Enişehir. According to documents of the Defterhane (The Ministry of Finance) in Constantinople, in that year Stoyan Chalakov and his partners S. Chomakov and D. Mitsura enjoyed

¹⁸ НБКМ-БИА, ф. 782, а. е. 97, л. 192-194, 196 и сл.

¹⁹ Груев, *Моите спомени*, с. 10; Кесяков, *Вълко и Стоян Тодорови Чалъкови*, с. 25-26.

²⁰ About him see М. Левкова, *Традиция и модерност в житейския път на Стоян Тодоров Чалъков (1768-1850)*, In: *Известия на Старозагорския исторически музей. Том IV: Личността в историята*. Сборник с доклади и съобщения от Националната научна конференция, посветена на 200 г. от рождението на Александър Екзарх, Захарий Княжески и Атанас Иванов (22-23 април 2010 г., Стара Загора). Стара Загора, 2011, с. 394-401.

²¹ НБКМ-БИА, ф. 782, а. е. 97, л. 4-25, 26-87. See also Янева, *Нови данни за стопански и фискални практики*, с. 455-462.

²² In reference to collection of *ondalık* of small cattle, the Rumeli provinces of the Ottoman Empire were organised in four parts (wings): Bahar, Vradja, Samokov and Salonica (Enişehir), М. Стайнова, А. Велков, *Турски документи за стопанската дейност на Чалъковци*, *Известия на НБКМ*. Т. IX (XV). София, 1969, с. 153-160; Z. Kazıç, *Osmanlılarda vergi sistemi*. Istanbul, Şamil Yaşınvevi, 1977, s. 115.

²³ Янева, *Нови данни за стопански и фискални практики*, с. 462-465.

a revenue of 5 million *kuruş* from only two repurchased tax areas – Bahar and Vratsa²⁴.

A business profit from repurchasing of *beğlik* and other taxes was realized by the other men from the family as well, among whom the Chalakov brothers – Valko and Nesho, their cousins Valko and Stoyan Kurtovich, as well as representatives of the next generation – Nedelyo Chalakov, Salcho Chomakov. Georgaki Stoyanovich Chaloglu, Pavel Kurtovich and others stand out.

The successful business of the Chalakovs (sometimes accompanied by financial failures, of course)²⁵ focuses on family ownership of considerable capital and properties. Although an overall account on several decades of repurchasing of tithes by the family is not possible to be made, due to incomplete business documentation, it had brought them considerable revenues of hundreds of thousands and, in some of the most successful campaigns, millions of *kuruş*, the possession of which characterizes them as one of the wealthiest Bulgarian families during the period under consideration not only in Plovdiv, but also among the other large tax collectors. Indicative of the family wealth is their property status, which Stoyan Chalakov left to his heirs – it was to the amount of 473,812 *kuruş* and has been identified by researchers as significantly large²⁶.

A significant part of the Chalakovs' revenues were invested in new enterprises while another considerable part was used to purchase real estate – agricultural property: fields, meadows, water mills, as well as urban real estate: houses,

²⁴ Стайнава, Велков, *Турски документи за стопанската дейност на Чалъковци*, с. 168.

²⁵ By the beginning of the 1840s, for example, economic failure also befell Stoyan Chalakov. Considerable shortages were experienced while collecting the *ondalik* and, as a result, Stoyan Chalakov was obliged to pay to the treasury a considerable sum of money, which led to his complete financial ruin. Thanks to his long-standing economic experience, Stoyan Chalakov soon managed to renew his positions in the Ottoman economy and to return to the tax farming system: Моравенов, *Паметник*, с. 95-96; Кепов, *Живот и дейност на Чалъковци*, л. 133-134.

²⁶ Sv. Yaneva, who focuses on an Ottoman Turkish document (*hüccet*) of 1861 for division of the inheritance, left by Stoyan Chalakov and amounting to 473,812 *kuruş*, compares the financial status of Stoyan Chalakov to the data about the property status of the population of Ruse, seen in the Ruse *kadı sijil* of the 1840s and 1850s. Based on this comparison, the author determines the property status of Stoyan Chalakov to be one of the most significant and owned only by the richest representatives of the Ruse elite. Янева, *Българи – откупвачи на данъци*, с. 273.

commercial buildings, etc. – all profitable sites in Plovdiv and the surroundings, bringing a solid income to their owners for decades²⁷.

Stoyan Chalakov's son – Georgaki Stoyanovich Chaloglu²⁸, for example, increased his father's legacy, buying Kurshum han in Plovdiv in 1848 for 24 000 *kuruş*, and the following year – an island in the Maritsa, together with the farm buildings there²⁹. In Georgaki Stoyanovich's archive a notebook with a detailed income statement, describing income from the rented real estate has been preserved. According to the information in this notebook, during the 1870s he and his family possessed a house, several trade *dükkân* (shops) in Kurshum han, a bakery, a *dükkân*, a café, a tavern, a butcher's in the „Little kapan (trap)”, several *kazançı dükkân*, half of Karaul han, a *mağaza* (storehouse) in the Little Bazaar in Plovdiv, a watermelon garden in Marasha neighbourhood in Plovdiv, fields in the village of Tahtalii (today's Topolovo), Chirpilie (today's Trud), Demirdjikyoi (today's Zhelyazno), in the Plovdiv district, vineyards in the nearby village Dermendere (today's Parvenets), vineyards and a water mill in Stanimaka (today's Asenovgrad), *salaş* (wooden shed) and slaughter house on the *ada* (island), which brought an annual income (1879) to their owners to the amount of 45 000 *kuruş*³⁰. In comparison, Georgaki Stoyanovich Chaloglu's remuneration as a member of the Senators' Council in the Ottoman capital for the six months of the following year, 1880, was 39 840 *kuruş*³¹.

The above-written characterizes the Chalakovs family as one of the most affluent and authoritative Plovdiv families, with their position in the economic life of the city, with lasting connections in the local Ottoman administration and the Sultan's palace, with influence among the Plovdiv „notables“³². It is not acci-

²⁷ According to the archival documents of the Chalakovs. See НМКМ-БИА, ф. 70, а. е. 2, л. 13, 60, etc. See also Янева, *Българи – откупвачи на данъци*, с. 272-279.

²⁸ More details about him see М. Левкова, *Възрожденецът Георги Стоянов Чалъков*, В: *Годишник на Регионален исторически музей–Пловдив. Кн. VI. Научен форум „Пловдивски приноси 2009” на тема „Род, семейство, отечество” (Пловдивските фамилии в националната история на България)*. Пловдив, Регионален исторически музей, 2009, с. 31-34.

²⁹ НМКМ-БИА, ф. 782, а. е. 3, л. 3-6.

³⁰ *Ibid.* а. е. 4, л. 55-75; л. 116.

³¹ *Ibid.* а. е. 91, л. 37.

³² These data are comparable to the information about another Plovdiv family, who had also risen on the economic and social ladder on the basis of their close integration with the imperial economy and government procurement – the Gyumyushgerdans. Descending from a family of *abadji*, in only a few generations, the representatives of the

dental that one of them, Chorbadji Valko Chalakov, at the zenith of his life and with self-confidence justified by the family property and prestige acquired, was called “Mayor of Philipopolis” on a donator’s portrait of 1840 in Rila Monastery³³. This title shows the position Valko Chalakov and his family had won among the high-ranking Plovdiv elite.

The rise of the Chalakovs among the Plovdiv elite is one of the best documented examples of Bulgarians penetrating into the local economy – merchants, craftsmen and entrepreneurs, who possess economic flair, considerable financial potential, and the confidence of community leaders. This economic and social rise of the family corresponds to the processes of increasing the numbers of the Bulgarian population and penetration of more and more Bulgarians in the economic life of the big Thracian city. Among them we find craftsmen such as the representatives of the wealthy and well organised abadji guild, as well as grocers, *arabacı*, *kaftancı*, publicans, furriers (*kürkçü*), *basmacı*, *aktar*, *saatçi*, *tüfekçi*, flour makers, *çuhacı*, *sahancı*, etc.; noble merchants, trading in the Ottoman Empire and Europe, like Salcho Chomakov, the Geshovs, the Kuyumdjioglu brothers, the Moravenov brothers from Koprivshtitsa, Tsoko Kableshkov, etc.; tax buyers like the men from the well-known Chalakovs and their relatives, the Chomakovs, the Doganovs, the Kesyakovs, etc.

The examples of the professional and property status of one of the renown Plovdiv families – the Chalakovs, provided in this article, are indicative of the economic power and the considerable financial potential of the Bulgarian economic and business elite. At the same time, many business people often perform leading social functions, unifying their fellow countrymen and leading their social life. We see the Chalakovs, as well as other Plovdiv notables of the 19th century as

Gyummyushgerdans had risen from ordinary guild members to first masters, organisers of the scattered and centralized manufacture and owners of their own textile factory, where hundreds of workers were hired. The capitals, arable land and urban real estate, owned by them and amounting to a total of 2,5 million *kuruş* put them in the category of the wealthiest Plovdiv families. On the Gyummyushgerdan family see Тодоров, Балканският град, с. 229-255. See also N. Ersoy-Hacısalihoğlu, Textile Trade in Bulgaria in the Mid-19th Century and the Gümüşgerdan Family, In: *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi*. Ed. By V. Constantini and M. Koller. Leiden/ Boston, Brill, 2008, p. 181-200.

³³ „Иждивением честнейшего и благороднейшего Господина Вулка Теодорович Чаликоглу, градоначалника филипополскаго, родом от с. Копривщица и сапруги его госпожа Ради” – reads the inscription on the donator’s portrait. Кепов, *Живот и дейност на Чалъковци*, л. 75.

generous orthodox donators to local churches and schools, sponsors for the publications of educational and theological literature, patrons, etc. Together with other local businessmen, they are among the initiators and organisers of the struggle of the Bulgarians in Plovdiv for the construction of Bulgarian churches and schools, for independent Bulgarian church hierarchy. We see them as representatives and defenders of their fellow countrymen in the municipal government and in communications with the Ottoman authorities³⁴.

All these roles are part of the social profile of the affluent Bulgarian economic elite in the 19th c. – socially active, with a clear national consciousness and leading positions not only in the economic life, but also in solving the most important issues, related to the development of the Bulgarian Revival society.

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³⁴ Левкова-Мучинова, *Родът Чалъковци през Възраждането*, с. 211-230.

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Maria Levkova-Muchinova

*Institute for Historical Studies,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
52 Shipchenski Prohod Blvd., Bl. 17, 1113 Sofia
Bulgaria
m_levkova@abv.bg*

FUNERAL AND COMMEMORATION CEREMONIES FOR MEMBERS OF THE SOVEREIGN FAMILIES IN BULGARIAN CITIES AFTER THE LIBERATION

Valentina Vaseva

Abstract: *The text deals with the peculiarities of the funeral ceremonies for members of the ruling families from the Third Bulgarian Kingdom. After the Liberation of Bulgaria, four members of the sovereign families have been buried on the territory of the country – Prince Alexander I of Battenberg in 1893, Princess Maria Louise in 1899, Queen Eleonore in 1917 and Tsar Boris III in 1943.*

The establishment of a new funeral culture in the Bulgarian cities after the Liberation takes place within the framework of the collective cultural processes caused by the shift in the socioeconomic conditions. Following the untimely death of Prince Alexander I of Battenberg and the fulfilment of his death wish to be buried in Bulgaria, a norm for royal burials, which until now did not exist in the cultural traditions of Bulgarian cities, was necessary to be rapidly introduced from Europe and adapted for Bulgarian conditions. The funeral of Prince Ferdinand's first wife, Princess Maria Louise, is the first female royal funeral. Thus, gradually, at the end of the 19th century the royal burials, along with the bestowing of posthumous honors to royalties, became an integral part of the urban culture of the Bulgarians.

The representatives of the ruling families were the elite of the Bulgarian society and after their deaths they were buried particularly solemnly, with government and military honors, following planned programs in accordance with the requirements of the Palace Protocol, which were published beforehand in the press.

Keywords: *Royal Funeral, Posthumous Honors, Commemoration, Funeral Culture, Civic Ceremonies*

After the Liberation of Bulgaria, four members of the sovereign families had been buried on the territory of the country. The establishment of a new funeral culture in the Bulgarian cities after

the Liberation was taking place in the framework of general cultural processes, caused by the drastic changes in the socio-economic conditions. After the untimely demise of Prince Alexander I Battenberg in 1893 and the fulfilment of his dying wish to be buried in Bulgaria, it was urgent to import a model of “royal burial” from Europe and adapt it to the Bulgarian conditions, since it had not existed in the cultural traditions of Bulgarian cities before. Soon after that, in 1899, Prince Ferdinand’s wife, Princess Maria-Louise died, and hers was the first royal female burial. Thus, gradually, at the end of the 19th c., “royal burials”, as well as bestowing posthumous honours to crowned individuals, were turning into tradition, reflecting the taste on of urban population for solemn public ceremonies and becoming an indelible part of Bulgarian urban culture¹.

Representatives of the ruling families were part of the elite of the post-Liberation society and were buried with particular solemnity, with state and military honours and following programs previously published in the press, in compliance with the Palace protocol². The first burial of a royal person in the new Bulgarian history was that of the already abdicated Prince Alexander I Battenberg in 1893. The latter died of peritonitis at the age of 36 on 5th November in Graz.

As soon as the news about his unexpected demise was sent by telegraph, the authorities in Sofia took measures for paying him the due respect: “Tomorrow, 7 November, besides the established annual memorial service for the soldiers who had fallen at Slivnitsa, an order was issued to hold such a service for Prince Alexander throughout Bulgaria”³. In Sofia, all branches of the army in full ceremonial uniform and morning were lined at the square in front of St Kral church. At the end of the memorial service, a cannon salute of 3 volleys was fired⁴. The editorial offices of Sofia newspapers received numerous reports that on 7th November memorial services dedicated to Prince Alexander I Battenberg were held in all cities of the Principality⁵.

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² В. Васева, Погребалната култура в българските градове на границата между XIX и XX век. (Погребения на политици), В: *Етнически и културни пространства на Балканите*. Част II. Съст. Св. Иванова. София, УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2008, с. 79.

³ *Свобода*, бр. 1241, 6.11.1893.

⁴ *Ibid.* 1242, 8.11.1893.

⁵ *Ibid.* 1245, 11.11.1893.

Three of the royal burials performed in the period from the Liberation to 1944 represent a specific case in ecclesiastical terms because the deceased did not profess Eastern Orthodox religion (with the exception of the last royal person who died in 1943 and was buried in Bulgaria – King Boris III). Prince Alexander I Battenberg and Queen Eleonore were Protestants while Princess Maria-Louise was a Catholic. That is why, the Bulgarian Orthodox clergy did not take part in the funeral services over their remains, but services for the repose of their souls have been held repeatedly in many Bulgarian churches. The blessing of the remains of the deceased Prince Alexander I Battenberg was performed by a Protestant pastor in Graz, but on 7th November 1893, Orthodox services were held in Sofia and in all towns of the Principality. After the arrival of the body in Sofia on 14th November, it was transported from the railway station to St Kral Cathedral, where a service was held, and then it was deposited in St George church until a Mausoleum was built. The remains were kept in St George church until 3rd January 1898 when they were ceremoniously transferred to the Mausoleum already built. During the transfer of remains ceremony, the rites in St George church and in the Mausoleum were performed by a Protestant pastor, without the participation of Bulgarian Orthodox clergy. Subsequently, the annual commemorations of the Prince's death were marked in the Mausoleum by Protestant pastors as well⁶. In this case, the behavior of the Orthodox clergy was inconsistent because having performed services during the funeral in 1893, five years later, they did not participate in the transfer of remains to the Mausoleum but allowed the pastor to perform a Protestant rite in an Orthodox church⁷. This inconsistency of the clergy was condemned by the opposition media⁸.

The complex situation was repeated for the funeral of Princess Maria-Louise on 27th January 1899, but in that case, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church found a way out of the situation⁹. Church services over the remains of the princess were held by the catholic rite by Archbishop Menini together with the catholic clergy in the palace chapel during the worship ceremony, in St Joseph Catholic Church in Sofia for the funeral service and in St Ludwig Catholic Cathedral in Plovdiv,

⁶ *Ibid.* 1242, 8.11.1893.

⁷ Васева, *Погребалната култура*, с. 85-86.

⁸ „The body of the deceased prince belongs to the state, where the orthodox faith is recognized as dominant and, in the meantime, old Grigorii and other bishops do not allow the orthodox clergy to perform church rites over that body” (*Свобода*, бр. 2171, 5.01.1898).

⁹ Васева, *Погребалната култура*, с. 86.

during the funeral on 28th January¹⁰. At the same time, in Sofia, the procession with the remains was met at the south entrance of St Kral Cathedral Church by the Bulgarian clergy, led by 4 metropolitans and 2 archimandrites. In the open-air service took part three deacons and about 16 priests, who served litany over the grave¹¹ of the deceased princess while the Nikolaev's Choir sang *Eternal memory*¹². This orthodox aspect was not included in the agenda initially, but was additionally imposed by the prince, the government and insisted upon by Metropolitan Kliment of the Holy Synod, so as not to ignore the feelings of the orthodox Bulgarians¹³. In Plovdiv. The local orthodox clergy, led by Metropolitan Nathaniel, awaited the procession in the middle of the route between the railway station and St Ludwig Catholic Cathedral and served a litany for the princess¹⁴. At the time of the funeral, services were held in all orthodox churches in Bulgaria, under the orders of the Synod, and in the Bulgarian church St Stefan in Fener, personally led by Exarch Joseph I¹⁵.

Immediately after the demise of Queen Eleonore on 12th September 1917 in Euxinograd Palace, a funeral service was held in Sofia, in St Nedelya Cathedral Church by the Metropolitan of Tarnovo Joseph and 12 priests. All ministers and their wives dressed in deep mourning were present, including the Prime Minister Dr. V. Radoslavov, the military and civil escorts of the King, All the generals, accompanied by the officers from the capital and all those who were there for medical treatment or on leave, the municipal counselors with the mayor R. V. Radev, senior clerical staff in full mourning attire, clerks from state and private banks. The allied and neutral states were represented by their diplomatic representatives and military proxies. After the service, the priest Apostol Georgiev gave a spiritually edifying speech¹⁶. In the obituary of Sofia Municipality, Mayor Radev, personally invited the citizens to take part in the funeral service. On 16th September, a requiem service for the queen was performed in the synagogue of Sofia, too¹⁷. Funeral

¹⁰ А. Станчова, *Дворцови и дипломатически спомени. 1887-1915*. София, Български художник & УИ „Св. Кл. Охридски“, 1991, с. 125.

¹¹ In the post-Liberation media, the word “grave” was sometimes used with the meaning of “coffin”.

¹² *Мир*, бр. 638, 28.01.1899.

¹³ *Свобода*, бр. 2304, 29.01.1899.

¹⁴ *Мир*, бр. 639, 30.01. 1899.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 640, 2.02.1899.

¹⁶ *Дневник*, бр. 3272, 14.09.1917.

¹⁷ *Заря*, бр. 1169, 15.09.1917.

services on the third day of Eleonore's demise were performed in all cities and villages of the kingdom¹⁸.

Although the first Bulgarian queen was a Protestant, the orthodox clergy participated with prayers at different moments of the preparation and during the funeral itself. Since Eleonore died in Euxinograd on 14th September, her body was transported by ship (military destroyer) to Varna and from there, by train, to Sofia. At Varna port the queen's remains were met in a solemn ceremony by the citizens of Varna, officers from the garrison and „all the clergy headed by Vratsa and Preslav Metropolitan Simeon“. After the coffin was transported by the royal train of mourning, the metropolitan, together with all the clergy, performed a funeral prayer service and expressed his condolences to the king¹⁹.

The usual funeral services in church and at the funeral were performed by Protestant pastors. Immediately after the death, the body was moved to a hall in Euxinograd Palace, where Pastor H. Petersen from the German Evangelical community in Sofia performed the first funeral service in the presence of the family, guards and servants. After that the coffin was moved to St Dimitar Chapel, where a guard squad of sailors stood in honour. Here the pastor served a funeral service and in a speech that followed he described the life and the merits of the queen. „After that the public was allowed into the chapel“²⁰. After the body was transferred to Sofia, it was exhibited for worship in the German Lutheran Church at Dondukov blvd. On 16th September a funeral service was performed there: „Yesterday morning in the local German Evangelical Church a German military funeral service was performed in the presence of His Royal Highness the King in a Prussian uniform. At the service only military individuals were present with the exception of two civilians: the Chairperson of the German community Pavel Kaufman and the Chairperson of the Evangelical church community Dörken. Pastor Petersen gave a moving speech“²¹.

On the day of the funeral, 18th September, the funeral service of Queen Eleonore in the German Lutheran Church was performed by the court priest and church counselor Auerbach from Köstritz (who had performed the marriage ritual for Ferdinand and Eleonore)²². The church bell announced the commencement of the funeral prayer service. After the mass, which continued for half an hour, the

¹⁸ *Народни права*, бр. 208, 14.09.1917.

¹⁹ *Утро*, бр. 2357, 17.09.1917.

²⁰ *Народни права*, бр. 212, 19.09.1917.

²¹ *Мир*, бр. 5232, 17.09.1917.

²² *Мир*, бр. 5505, 12.09.1918, с. 2.

funeral procession started. “At the Cathedral Church St Nedelya, the Synod elders with all the orthodox clergy of Sofia awaited the procession in order to bow to the remains. At the Russian monument, the Sofia Metropolitan Partenii, dressed in full church attire, the head of the military clergy, the Tarnovo Metropolitan Joseph and the spiritual educator from the military school Father Shivachev, PhD, together with the protodeacon Iv. Stefanov awaited the procession and joined it to Boyana”²³. In the funeral procession to the Boyana Church, where the queen was buried (Fig. 1), the orthodox priests walked behind the three funeral cars with the wreaths and before the carriage with the remains. Immediately after it followed the protestant pastors, then King Ferdinand and the royal family (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1. Tomb of Queen Eleonore in the yard of the Boyana Church.

Photo V. Vaseva, October 21, 2019

In Boyana, before the queen’s remnants were dropped into the grave, the church counselor Auerbach gave a moving speech, after which the king asked the Sofia Metropolitan Partenii to perform the burial ritual in the orthodox rite. After reading the prayer *Heavenly Father*, the orthodox priests started singing *Eternal Memory* and the coffin with the queen’s remains was dropped in the tomb under

²³ *Народни права*, бр. 212, 19.09.1917.

the roar of cannon salutes, given by the army. At that moment, the military band was playing the national anthem. After that, the king and all other present threw flowers and three handfuls of earth into the grave²⁴. According to another report on Eleonore's funeral: "At the grave, the Lutheran pastors read prayers, as well as our Metropolitan Partenii, the Tarnovo Metropolitan Joseph, Deacon Stephan, and also the catholic clergy, represented by Archbishop Vikentii and other priests"²⁵.

The court priest Auerbach performed the service for the first year after the queen's demise in the German Protestant Church in Sofia and at her grave in Boyana. Only invited persons could attend those two services²⁶.



Fig. 2. The funeral procession of Queen Eleonore with Orthodox priests.

State Archives [ИДА 12, ф. 3К, он. 7, а.е. 343]

The only royal figure, died and buried in Bulgaria, who converted to Orthodox Christian faith was King Boris III. That is why, all services after his sudden death on 28 August 1943 were performed by the senior Orthodox clergy and all

²⁴ *Дневник*, бр. 5276, 19.09.1917.

²⁵ *Народни права*, бр. 212, 19.09.1917.

²⁶ *Мир*, бр. 5504, 11.09.1918, с. 2.

the priests of Sofia. A few hours after the death of Boris III the remains were taken to the Palace Chapel St Peter and Pavel, where Metropolitan Paisii performed a funeral prayer service. On the first day of worship, 30 August, the first to bow to the remains of the king in St Alexander Nevski Cathedral were the Synod bishops led by the Vidin Metropolitan Neophit²⁷. On the funeral day, 5th September, the service was performed by the metropolitans and bishops of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. At the end of the service the deputy Chairperson of the Synod gave a speech. According to the agenda, in front of the carriage with the remains of the deceased king a cross was carried, followed by the „bishops and priests in a composition of 100 people“. The remains were accompanied by representatives of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Church – the Sofia Metropolitan Stephan, the Vratsa Metropolitan Paisii and the Nevrokop Metropolitan Boris. In the train of mourning to the Rila Monastery were also bishops and priests, who participated in the funeral ceremony. When the coffin with the remains arrived at the monastery, it was brought into the church by 10 bishops. On the next day a worship service at the grave was held and then the usual three-day and 40-day services followed²⁸.

* * *

With royal funerals, the intentions of the institutions are that the remains be buried forever in specially built mausoleums, in key places in the capital. While these religious buildings were being built, the remains were kept at the altars of central churches²⁹. With Alexander Battenberg, these intentions were kept and fulfilled while with Maria-Louise's funeral the building of a mausoleum was not realized and the remains were permanently preserved in the Plovdiv Catholic Cathedral St Ludwig, which was dearly loved by the princess (Fig. 3)³⁰.

The remains of Prince Alexander I was temporarily buried in St George's Church, and the government granted a credit and announced a competition for the design of a monument-tomb. The jury did not approve any of the designs and without any other competition, the government assigned the task to one of the

²⁷ Д. Шарланов, *Тайните на двореца*. София, Иван Вазов, 1999, с. 173.

²⁸ Шарланов, *Тайните на двореца*, с. 176, 215, 217, 219; *Архив на МВР*, Об-2282, т. VI, л. 118-120.

²⁹ Васева, *Погребалната култура*, с. 89.

³⁰ Д. Ганчев, *Спомени за княжеското време*. София, Отечествен фронт, 1983, с. 140; С. Константи, *Фердинанд Лисицата*. София, Интерфред, Вис Виталис, 1992, с. 219-222.

participants - the Swiss architect Herman Mayer, who had to redo his design and implement it. The building started in 1895 and finished in 1897³¹, when the prince's remains were moved to the mausoleum with a solemn ceremony (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3. Tomb of Princess Maria Louise in the cathedral church St Ludwig in Plovdiv.

Photo V. Vaseva, May 30, 2019

The royal burials were financed by the state, following a preliminary worked out agenda, published in the media. The whole organisation of the mourning ceremonies was institutionalized by the state, represented by the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly. The Capital's Municipal Council and personally, the Mayor, participate actively in the preparation, with the duty to inform the citizens in time through ads in the newspapers and obituaries in the streets, about the day and tome of the forthcoming funeral, to organise the mourning decoration of the city on the day of the funeral and to secure the order in the streets during the procession with the help of the police³².

³¹ Станчова, *Дворцови и дипломатически*, с. 70; Т. Токин, Батенберг жертва трона за съединена България. (148 г. от рождението на първия български княз), *Труд*, 5.04. 2005, с. 20.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 99.



Fig. 4. Mausoleum of Prince Alexander Battenberg.

Photo V. Vaseva, August 27, 2019

With royal funerals, the agenda would be devised according to the requirements of the court protocol. The agenda for the funeral of Prince Alexander Battenberg was signed by the oberhofmarshal of the Palace and devised on the “supreme order” of Prince Ferdinand. Maria-Louise’s funeral was also organised by the Palace, but the agenda was assigned to a special commission under the chairmanship of the capital’s Mayor D. Yablanski. In its composition were included two engineers, two architects, a representative of the Palace and an auditor from the Ministry of the Interior³³. The funeral agenda for Queen Eleonore was devised by a commission from the Palace³⁴. The details of King Boris III’s funeral were worked out by the Council of Ministers in a special agenda³⁵.

³³ *Мир*, бр. 635, 20.01.1899; Вaseва, *Погребалната култура*, с. 102.

³⁴ *Заря*, бр. 1169, 15.09.1917 г.; ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 118, л. 31.

³⁵ Шарланов, *Тайните на двореца*, с. 174.

The press also announced the different forms of mourning that should be observed - palace mourning (for the residents and visitors of the palace), mourning in the army, which was the longest and most strict in those regiments, which had been under the command of the Supreme Commander, and the so called “national mourning”, which included various behavior norms and elements of clothing. The mandatory mourning attire was announced in “Agenda for the funeral ceremony for Her Royal Highness Queen Eleonore”: attire – redingote, top hat, black tie, black gloves. The military – official green uniform, for senior order and ribbon, mourning crepe on the arm and fore-arm³⁶. In the agenda for the funeral of King Boris III, the mourning attire was as follows: for the civilians – coat, top hat, black tie, black gloves and a black ribbon on the left arm, for the military – uniform for senior order and ribbon, black crepe on the left arm, the knot and order wrapped in black crepe³⁷.

The military guard of honour, the mourning march of the military band and the carrying of the orders and other decorations of the deceased royal person in the beginning of the procession yield a special solemnity. The remains of Prince Alexander I Battenberg as a former Supreme Commander of the Bulgarian army and of King Boris III were carried to their graves on a cannon gun carriage, drawn by horses decorated in mourning attire. Another special feature of the military funerals is also the fact that the military participate in the procession carrying their flags. Furthermore, the coffin is put on and taken off the carriage by hand, by high-ranking officers, and on the coffin lid the hat and checker of the deceased are placed during the procession. The war horse of the deceased also takes part in the procession³⁸.

During Prince Alexander’s funeral, military honours were offered at the railway station on the arrival of the remains – the band was playing the mourning march and cannon blasts were given. The funeral carriage of the prince consisted of a cannon gun platform, drawn by 6 horses and convoyed by senior military ranking officers, followed by two ober-officers, specially appointed for service at the remains. After the funeral, the troops of the Metropolitan Garrison passed in front of Prince Ferdinand and the crowned guests in the square in front of the palace, in a ceremonial march³⁹.

³⁶ *Държавен вестник*, бр. 215, 28.09.1917; ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 118, л. 45.

³⁷ Шарланов, *Тайните на двореца*, с. 219; *Архив на МВР*, Об-2282, т. VI, л. 118-120.

³⁸ Васева, *Погребалната култура*, с. 104-106.

³⁹ *Свобода*, бр. 1247, 13.11.1893 and 1248, 15.11.1893.

At Maria-Louise's funeral, a volley of 21 cannon gun blasts announced the start of the funeral procession from the palace and while it lasted, there was a blast every 5 minutes. The Garrison troops stood in guard of honour along the streets from the palace to St Joseph's Church while the funeral carriage was convoyed by high-ranking officers and one division of 24 cavalrymen. During the funeral service in the church, a guard of honour was placed by the hearse. After the funeral service, the garrison troops lined at the Alexander Square marched in front of Prince Ferdinand and his guests. Among the latter was the Serbian King Milan, who was defeated by the Bulgarians during the war of 1885. Soldiers with lighted torches also took part in the midnight ceremony of carrying the remnants of the deceased princess from the church to the Sofia railway station. After the funeral in Plovdiv, there was also a parade by the local garrison's troops⁴⁰.

When Queen Eleonore died in 1917, military troops also took active part in the ceremonies; all the more, the funeral was in a time of war. There is no information in the archives, however, about a mourning ceremonial march, as with the other three funerals. The conveyance of the queen's remains from Euxinograd Palace, where she died to Varna, where a mourning train was awaiting them, was conducted by a military destroyer, and for this reason, the guard of honour by the coffin was of sailors. On another destroyer the wreaths of flowers were carried and the two ships were accompanied by "2 airplanes which dropped flowers on the way"⁴¹. "When the destroyer with the coffin and the remains appeared at Varna port, the honorary company and officers paid their respect under the sad sounds of the naval military band". The naval officers from the destroyer carried by hand the coffin to the mourning train⁴². After the queen's remains arrived on the mourning train to Sofia, they were taken from the railway station directly to the Lutheran church at *Dondukov blvd.* where they were exhibited for worship. On the day of the funeral the service was also held there.

On the second day of the worship in the Lutheran church in Sofia, a German military funeral service was performed in the presence of King Ferdinand⁴³, and the next day, after the service, the sarcophagus with the remains of the queen was taken out by 4 generals while a company of cadets paid military honours and the guard band played a mourning march. During the mourning procession, the funeral carriage was surrounded by cavalrymen with their swords drawn on one

⁴⁰ *Mup*, бр. 638, 28.01.1899.

⁴¹ *Ympo*, бр. 2358, 18.09.1917; *ЦДАА* 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 118, л. 3-4.

⁴² *Ympo*, бр. 2357, 17.09.1917; *ЦДАА* 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 118, л. 5.

⁴³ *Mup*, бр. 5232, 17.09.1917.

side, and cadets walking with the procession on the other (the so-called moving guard of honour)⁴⁴. According to the agenda of the funeral, the procession was arranged in the following way: “the Mayor on horseback, a ward of horse guards, the Head of the Sofia Garrison, gen. Tsenov, accompanied by his aide-de-camp also on horseback, a company of cadets from the military school, another company from First Sofia Infantry Regiment, the guard band, the orders of the deceased, carried by two officers on cushions, the wreaths carried by four mourning carriages...” During the descent of the coffin in the grave at Boyana Church, cannon salutes were given by the army⁴⁵.

After the death of King Boris III in 1943, the need arose to elect a new commander-in-chief immediately, namely, the heir to the throne Simeon, moreover the events unfolded during the war. On 28th August, the Minister of War Gen. N. Mihov informed the army that their commander-in-chief King Boris III died and was succeeded by Prince Simeon of Turnovo. On the next day, 29th August, military ranking officers and soldiers took an oath of allegiance to Simeon II. A few hours after the death, the king’s remnants were moved to the Palace Chapel St Peter and Pavel. The dead king was dressed in general’s infantry uniform and the battle flags were laid next to the coffin. Four officers from the guard stood on guard of honour⁴⁶.

On the next day, 29th August, in the presence of the Minister of War the remnants were carried by hand through a guard of honour to the Monument church St Alexander Nevski, where the worship and the funeral service were to be held. The coffin was laid on a small podium in front of a king’s throne, wrapped in black and the king’s sword was placed on the left-hand side⁴⁷. During the worship on 2nd September, in front of the monument church, military units honoured the six-year old Simeon as a king for the first time. On the day of the funeral, 5th September, the units of Sofia Garrison stood guard of honour from the church to the Central railway station. Representative units of all branches of the army and police stood in front of the church. At the entrance members of the Guard stood in honour. After the funeral service, the coffin with the remains was taken out by the military Minister, two generals and other officials and was placed on a cannon gun platform, drawn by 3 pairs of horses, covered in black. An Honorary division gave

⁴⁴ *Балканска поща*, бр. 815, 19.09.1917; *Дневник*, бр. 5276, 19.09.1917; *Народни права*, бр. 212, 19.09.1917; ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 118, л. 22, 34, 17.

⁴⁵ *Заря*, бр. 1172, 19.09.1917; ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 118, л. 37.

⁴⁶ Шарланов, *Тайните на двореца*, с. 170, 173.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

honour at the time of carrying the coffin out of the church. The funeral procession was led by soldiers in mourning attire while the Guards division of the king made a moving guard of honour⁴⁸.

According to the funeral agenda, at the crossroads between Princess Maria-Louise blvd. and Hristo Botev blvd., viewed from the railway station, the procession stopped and the officials lined up around the platform for the ceremonial march of the army before the remnants of the king. Four generals stood honorary guard around the coffin, to the right stood senior German officers and generals. After the ceremonial march, the coffin was taken down from the cannon gun platform and carried by hand by generals into the station, where it was put in the specially prepared funeral carriage. In the station hall the flags of the army units were lined on both sides and the coffin was taken between them. At the platform, a company from the armored regiment saluted with Present arms! Under a flag and music. Here the official part of the ceremony ended⁴⁹.

The coffin with King Boris III's remains was transported in a special mourning train from Sofia to Kocherinovo station, in order to be buried at Rila Monastery, according to the king's dying wish. Guard soldiers stood around the coffin in the mourning carriage. From Kocherinovo to the Rila Monastery the body was transported in a Steyer military car. After the funeral prayer service, the coffin was descended in the grave inside the church, to the right of the altar. At the moment of descent in the garrisons all over the country, cannon gun blasts roared⁵⁰.

* * *

An essential part of the preparation for the funerals of the crowned persons were the mourning decorations of the cities on the day of the funeral. Usually, the Municipal Council and personally the Mayor would invite the citizens to put black flags on their houses and shops. After that was done, the whole city would change its appearance and acquire a "mourning look". On the day of the funeral the shops in the market would be closed with black flags flying on them. Along the main streets, especially those where the mourning procession would pass, citizens would hang black flags on their homes and shops. The public buildings would also be decorated with black flags. As a sign of mourning, all entertainment in the city

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* с. 216-217; *Архив на МВР*, О6-2282, т. VI, л. 118-120.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 218-219; *Архив на МВР*, О6-2282, т. VI, л. 118-120.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

would be cancelled, the music in restaurants – stopped and obituaries pasted in the streets⁵¹.

The mourning flags at the funeral of Princess Maria-Louise literally covered the facades of the buildings. Many restaurants, hotels and shops along the streets where the funeral procession was to pass were also decorated in black. The citizens of Sofia demonstrated imagination when decorating their commercial buildings for the mourning – “most often, a portrait of the Princes was seen in the windows, painted in black chalk and framed in black draperies”. The entomologist prof. Bahmetiev, had anchored the portrait of the princess in an original frame of butterflies and insects. A rich mourning decoration was hung on the popular pub *The Red Crab*. During the funeral, the mourning procession moved slowly and Prince Ferdinand would frequently stop for a moment to look at the draperies of private buildings. For the princess’s funeral in Plovdiv, the city was also immersed in mourning decorations⁵². The capital was covered in black flags on the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the princess’s death in 1900⁵³.

During the funeral of Alexander Battenberg at the Colourful Bridge (today’s Lions’ Bridge) a triumphal arch with a proper inscription was erected. There were two arches at the lavish funeral of Maria-Louise – one was at its usual place, at the Colourful Bridge, and the other – at the entrance of Targovska street into Alexander I Square. The first arch had three openings and the second - one. The arches were covered in black material, only their pediments being decorated by princely coats of arms. The press described the arches as “spectacular”, “built in Roman triumphal style”⁵⁴. During the prince’s funeral, from the arch at the Colourful Bridge to the cathedral church and St George’s church, pillars wrapped in black material, decorated with flowers and connected with garlands of greenery were erected on both sides of the streets. An army cordon was lined up along the same streets. The whole city was decorated with black flags and the streets where the funeral procession passed were all in black. The lanterns were wrapped in black crepe and lit⁵⁵.

During King Boris III’s funeral in 1943, two mourning arches were also built in Maria-Louise str., wrapped in black crepe and decorated with the king’s

⁵¹ Васева, *Погребалната култура*, с. 107.

⁵² *Мир*, бр. 635, 20 ян. 1899.

⁵³ *Нов век*, бр. 129, 31.01.1900.

⁵⁴ *Мир*, бр. 637, 26.01.1899.

⁵⁵ *Свобода*, бр. 1246, 12.11.1893 and 1248, 15.11.1893.

portraits. Along the streets where the mourning procession passed black flags hung from the poles and altars with burning incense were put at the corners⁵⁶.

For Princess Maria-Louise's funeral at the end of the 19th century, the Vienna Funeral Home *Concordia* was hired for the mourning decoration, „as it was not possible at all to obtain the necessary equipment in such a short time”. The company immediately sent their director Lučička to Sofia, with nearly two carriages of equipment and accessories, among which black material for draperies, chandeliers, lamps, several cases of wax candles, etc. *Concordia* was assigned partly with the decoration of the palace and fully the mourning decoration of the Sofia and Plovdiv Catholic churches – St Joseph and St Ludwig. Eleven obelisks and about 600 pillars were erected along the route of the mourning procession, all wrapped in black material and decorated with flags and coats of arms. On the day of the funeral, Vitosha street “looked like a real “Via funeralis”. Along its length from the cathedral church St Kral to the railway station on both sides of the street were erected high mourning pillars. At the crossroads, mourning obelisks were erected and next to each of them two tripod incense burners with burning wicks, dipped in petroleum and wrapped in black were placed. The street lanterns were also wrapped in crepe and lit. The central streets were sprinkled with sand and levelled specially for the funeral. The balconies and the windows were literally filled with spectators dressed in black, who had paid 5 to 30 levs per seat⁵⁷.

The richly decorated in gold mourning carriage was also brought from Vienna especially for the funeral of the princess. During the second female funeral of a crowned person in Bulgaria, that of Queen Eleonore, the decoration was considerably more modest. The queen herself wished at her death bed to be buried modestly, without undue extravagance. The funeral carriage that carried her remains to her grave on the day of the funeral was traditionally drawn by three pairs of horses, decorated in mourning attire (with black shrouds and black feathers on their heads) and decorated to the side and on top with crowns – a symbol of royal power (Fig. 5). The traditional mourning shroud on the coffin of the crowned deceased women is violet.

At Queen Eleonore's death, a commission of architects, municipal counselors and government officials was appointed to manage the mourning decoration of the streets, along which the mourning procession would pass⁵⁸. Under the guidance of the architect of the capital municipality B. Stoyanov and the painter

⁵⁶ Шарланов, *Тайните на двореца*, с. 176.

⁵⁷ *Мир*, бр. 636, 23.01.1899; 637, 26.01.1899 and 638, 28.01.1899.

⁵⁸ *Дневник*, бр. 5273, 15.09.1917; *ЦДА* 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 118, л. 14.

Haralambi Tachev, the decoration of the roads to the villages of Knyazhevo and Boyana started. The Boyana Church St Nikolay was entirely decorated in black canvases at its south side, where the funeral was to take place. Two bishops visited the Boyana Church before the funeral to inspect the preparation⁵⁹.



Fig. 5. The funeral chariot of Queen Eleonore.

State Archives [ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, он. 15, а.е. 63]

On the day of the funeral, the black flags of mourning wound over private and public buildings, shops and residences. Small mourning flags also flew over all trams. Along the streets where the mourning procession passed, the lamps were wrapped in crepe and black flags dropped to the ground. At turnings and crossroads, black-clad altars were placed. The electric lamps were lit during the funeral procession. All trams were stopped⁶⁰. In front of the Lutheran church and at the entrance to the Boyana church altars with burning incense were placed. A total of four large and 18 small altars were placed at the crossroads⁶¹. The entrance door of

⁵⁹ *Утро*, бр. 2358, 18.09.1917; ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, он. 1, а.е. 118, л. 42.

⁶⁰ *Мир*, бр. 5232, 17.09.1917; *Народни права*, бр. 212, 19.09.1917.

⁶¹ *Дневник*, бр. 5273, 15.09.1917; *Балканска поща*, бр. 814, 18.09.1917 and 815, 19.09.1917.

the Lutheran church at *Dondukov Blvd.* was draped in black and there were two Guards standing at the door. Inside the church everything was wrapped in black, even the seats. The coffin in which the body was laid, was placed on a raised stage (Fig. 6). Around the coffin there was an honorary Guard of four⁶².

As early as 20th September 1917, a *Manifesto of Gratitude* was issued in the palace, signed by King Ferdinand, in which he expressed his gratitude to the people for their participation in the mourning and the funeral ceremony for Queen Eleonore⁶³.



Fig. 6. Adoration before the remains of Queen Eleonore in the German Lutheran Church in Dondukov Blvd. in Sofia. State Archives [ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, оп. 15, а.е. 63]

⁶² Утро, бр. 2356, 16.09.1917; ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 118, л. 40.

⁶³ Държавен вестник, бр. 213, 26.09.1917, ЦДА 12, ф. 3К, оп. 1, а.е. 115, л. 123-124.

* * *

Immediately after the funerals of the royal persons, their graves would become places of remembrance, where posthumous honours were given annually and funeral prayers were offered. The Mausoleum of Prince Alexander Battenberg turned into an obligatory place of worship during the celebrations of the Unification as early as the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, on 6th September, the traditional visit to the mausoleum and leaving wreaths in front of the sarcophagus, honours not only the historical event, but also the Prince, whose contribution to the Unification is remembered every year.

Significant changes occurred during the communist regime, after the proclamation of the republic and the expulsion of the royal family from Bulgaria. The aspiration of the communist government was to eradicate completely the memory of the deceased members of the sovereign families, buried in Bulgaria after the Liberation. Their graves were transformed from places of remembrance to places of oblivion – difficult to access or completely destroyed, with the remains taken out, their fate unknown. The graves of Princes Maria-Louise in the Catholic Cathedral “St Ludwig in Plovdiv and of Prince Alexander I Battenberg in Sofia are sinking into oblivion due to the limited access to them. The graves of King Boris III in the Rila Monastery (in 1946) and of Queen Eleonore in the Boyana church (in 1964) were desecrated, with the remnants taken out and the tombstone inscriptions deleted. The same fate befell the second grave of Boris III in the court of Vrana Palace, which was destroyed in 1953, precisely so that it does not continue to be a popular place of worship for paying posthumous honours to the last Bulgarian King.

The royal tombs destroyed were restored in the 1990s. Only after the fall of the regime was their function as places of remembrance gradually restored. Today, there we mark the anniversaries of the deceased members of the sovereign families and perform services. After their return to Bulgaria, the royal family usually participates in the services, performed by representatives of the higher clergy. Jubilee anniversaries of the demise of royal persons are marked with particular solemnity. The Mausoleum of Prince Alexander I Battenberg has again become an indelible part of the Unification celebrations after recognizing 6th of September as a national holiday. Gradually, its popularity is growing not only as a place of remembrance, but also as a place for paying tribute to the first Bulgarian monarch in the new history of Bulgaria.

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Valentina Vaseva

*Institute of Ethnology and Folklore
with Ethnographic Museum,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
6A Moskovska st., 1100 Sofia
Bulgaria
valiavaseva@abv.bg*

WOMEN HONORARY CITIZENS IN THE SOCIAL SPACE OF SOFIA (FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY)

Georgeta Nazarska

Abstract: *“Reputational elites” had amassed symbolic capital in the Bulgarian public space after the Liberation. Such elites are examined here through the institution of honorary citizenship, focused on women who had been awarded the “Honorary Sign” of Sofia, before the power change in 1944. Investigated is the positioning of charities, chaired by ladies with honorary citizenship, in the social topography and the public space of the capital; in particular, in the secular/sacred urban spaces, and in “lieux de mémoire”. That notion is one tool used, and cultural and historical social topography is another. The methods of social mapping and social network analysis are also applied.*

Keywords: *Honorary Citizens, Sofia, Women, Lieux de Mémoire, Reputational Elites*

Introduction

This paper deals with reputational elites¹ that had gained their symbolic capital after the Liberation (1878). In this case they are considered through the institution of honorary citizenship, with a

¹ Reputational elites are considered a social class that is defined by prestige. On the one hand, they are closely connected to the political power elites, and are consciously built up by rulers in order to wield influence and power. See Fl. Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1953; N. Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1980; R. A Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1961.

focus on women who had been awarded the “Honorary Sign” of Sofia, until that institution was ended with the radical power change of 1944.

The aim of this research is to “map” that group of women, defined as part of a “reputational elite”² in the social space of Sofia in the first half of the 20th century. The positioning of charities and their heads, honorary citizens of Sofia, in the social topography and the public *milieu*; their “mapping” in the secular and sacred spaces of the city; and their presence in the urban „lieux de mémoire“. That notion, associated with Pierre Nora, was put to use here, beside the historic analysis and reconstruction, plus cultural-historical topography (seen as a border scientific effort, corresponding with historic and urban geography, and with social and cultural history). The methods of social mapping and social network analysis were also instrumentalized.

The Honorary Sign of Sofia

In the 1880s, the institution of honorary citizenship was created in Sofia, and lasted until the end of the 1920s. It was awarded seldom, during a person’s lifetime or posthumously, mostly to foreigners who had made a donation to “beautify” the city, or for a charitable cause. It was a title awarded by decision of the Municipal Council, and did not entail any material gains; after 1917, the holder would receive a special diploma, designed by Alexander Lambrev³.

That Honorary Sign was awarded to a rather non-homogenous group⁴. Among the bearers were political figures (General Leonid Nikolayevich Sobolev,

² According to the theorists of nationalism, the nation state has a monopoly over legitimate culture. As in other nation states, the Bulgarian national project was directed by the educated elites. A new symbolic system was constructed to legitimize them in various ways. Typical is their inclusion into encyclopedias and biographical directories, in the “canon” of literature and in the award system at state, local and branch level; streets, squares and public institutions would be named after them, etc. See A. Смит, *Националната идентичност*. София, Кралица Маб, 2000, с. 116-124, 126-127, 218-219; Ъ. Гелнър, *Нации и национализъм*. София, Панорама, 1999.

³ ДА – София, ф. 1к, оп. 1, а.е. 111, л. 40.

⁴ Honorary Citizens of Sofia became: in 1883, General L. N. Sobolev (1883-1913), a Russian army officer and prime minister of Bulgaria 1882-1883, and General A.V. Kaulbars (1844-1925), Russian army officer and Bulgarian Minister of War 1882-1883; in 1896 – Evloghie Gheorghieff (1819-1897, big businessman, entrepreneur, banker and stock trader] in 1907 – Paul Kaufmann, a German industrialist, representative of Krupp-Werke and Chair of the German colony in Sofia; in 1917 – I. (Jakob) Mandelbaum (1859-

General Alexander Kaulbars, Lord Herbert Gladstone), and financiers and bankers (Evloghie Gheorghieff, Paul Kaufmann, Otto Bieligg, Jakob Mandelbaum). There was one trait, however, that all of them shared: their strong connectedness to the National (Macedonian) question, through certain political circles⁵ – Bulgarian and foreign, and with the royal institution.

In 1928, the capital's Mayor Vladimir Vazov introduced a new system of awards for worthy citizens. The Municipal Honorary Sign was to be of several classes and accompanied by a card, and in March 1929 a special badge was made: Sofia's coat of arms, encircled in a gold-and-blue elliptical wreath, all inscribed in a silvery rhombus. The privileges that went with the honorary citizenship were: an inscription into the book of worthy citizens, a collection of biographical information and photographs for the Municipal Museum, free travel on public transportation and free use of all the Municipal baths⁶.

Until 1942, that badge was not awarded often. Only about fifteen persons became its bearers: Bulgarians and foreigners, politicians and experts (ministers, architects, engineers, geologists, mayors, etc.⁷). Usually, they would be selected

1918), a German, owner of the *Manoli* tobacco industry and Honorary Consul of Bulgaria in Berlin; in 1918 – Otto Bieligg (1843-1918), an Austrian, long-term Chair of the *Balkan* insurance company (1895-1905); in 1927 – Lord Herbert John Gladstone (1854-1930), Governor-General of the Union of South Africa 1910-1914, son of William Gladstone and husband of Dorothy Paget (1876-1953), member of the Balkan Committee and philanthropist. See *ДА* – София, ф. 1к, оп. 1, а.е. 458, л. 116; а.е. 515а, л. 262гр., 292, 333; Лорд и леди Гладстон посещават София, *Българско-британски преглед*, 15.10.1927; М. Тодорова, Р. Стоянова, Софийска община, В: В. Николова, Р. Стоянова (съст.), *Енциклопедия Дарителството*, т. 3. София, Български дарителски форум, 2011, с. 52, 55.

⁵ Mandelbaum and Bieligg were business partners of the leaders, respectively, of the Liberal and the Peoples' Parties.

⁶ *ЦДА*, ф. 1267к, оп. 1, а.е. 1, л. 3-4 гр.; Почетният знак на Столичната община, *Лъч*, №191, 29.07.1929.

⁷ They were: in 1928 – Nikola Stoyanov (1874-1967), a financier, Director of the Central Cooperative Agrarian Bank and the National Debt Directorate; in 1929 – Tsvyatko Boboshevski, (1884-1952), several times minister; in 1933 – General Vasilii Y. Gurko (1864-1937), son of General Yossif Gurko, active in the Russian All-Soldiers' Union (ПОВС) in emigration, and Ivan Ivanov (1861-1965), hydro engineer and Mayor of Sofia, for the Rila water supply system; in 1935 – Todor G. Vlaykov (1865-1943), writer and politician, for a jubilee, and professors Georgi Bontchev (1866-1955) and Vassil Radev (1879-1946), geologist, also for the Rila water; in 1937 – Prof. architect Adolf Musmann (1880-1956), author of Sofia's urban plan, Hans Meissner (1896-1958),

for contributing to important municipal projects (like the building of the Rila water supply or the new urban construction plan), or on the occasion of a jubilee of theirs.

Women bearers of the Honorary Sign of Sofia (1931-1932)

During the researched period, twelve women were awarded the Honorary Sign: Rada Bourmova – Daneva (1868-1952), Dona Kraychova – Karandzhoulouva (1869-1934), Theodora Entcheva – Paprikova (1869-1943), Julia Scheider – Malinova (1869-1955), Princess Eudoxia (1898-1985), all in 1931; and in 1932: Desha Ryaskova – Stantcheva (1858-1956), Elena Valtcheva – Tchakalova (1875-1948), Dr. Maria Dajrova – Hadzhiangelova (1876-1943), Constance Petrovitch – Liaptcheff (1887-1942), Penka (Pena) Radoslavova – Gheorghieva (1888-1981), Rada Guerassimova – Angelova (1887-?), and Trayana Dimtcheva.

It is remarkable that they are rather numerous, meaning, commensurate to the number of men; and that they received the award only during the mandates of mayors Vladimir Vazov and Boyan Nachov.

As a rule, in the documents, the motive given for conferring the honor is charity work. The municipality would never mention these women's activities in the frame of feminist formations or in connection with the National question. We read, e.g.: “[activities] aimed at lightening the burden of her fellow citizens, befallen by misfortune (re princess Eudoxia); indisputable activity in the field of charity (re Julia Malinova); quiet care for the small, the feeble and the helpless, the duty of every citizen, man and woman (re Malinova again)”.

The prosopographic database (see the *Appendix*) shows that the honored women were born in a period spanning nearly two generations, from the end of the 1850s to the end of the 1890s. That portends formation in the late Bulgarian Revival period and also in the post-Liberation period, under the influence of a number of the intense internal factors and foreign pressures, specific for the period.

director and Franz Convicini (1901-1962), conductor of the Frankfurt Opera; in 1939 – Georgi Kyosseivanov (1884-1958), foreign and Prime Minister; in 1940 – Prof. Stefan Petkov (1860-1951), botanist, for a jubilee; in 1942 – prof. Bogdan Filov (1883-1945), prime minister and foreign minister, and Petar Gabrovsky, (1898-1945), interior minister, and engineer Dimitar Vassilev (1883-1945), minister of public buildings, roads and social infrastructure.

The honored women had been born and were living in big cities (Sofia, Veliko Tarnovo, Varna, Rousse, Gabrovo, Stara Zagora, etc.) which had traditions in charity, including help to immigrants from Macedonia and Dobruja. There is only one foreigner among them, Julia Malinova, who was a Jewess born in Odessa, but some hailed from the Bulgarian diaspora that immigrated from Constantinople, North Dobruja, and Macedonia. Mostly the women are very well educated, with university or high school education. All are housewives except Dr. Hadzhiangelova, who, after being widowed, returned to her profession.

What is the reason why these women, different in age and interests, were united in that group by being picked for honors from so many other active philanthropists? Firstly, for years they had been chairs or board members of the biggest and most active charities in the capital, helping orphans, workers' families and the elderly (the Nursing Home, the orphanages "Prince Boris of Tarnovo", "Rodina" (Homeland) and "Bitolya", the "Julia Malinova" Shelter for educated solitary women, the "Vseh skorbyastih radost" (Joy of All Who Sorrow) Old People's Home. However, contribution to charities in the capital may not have been the decisive factor, as the activity of Constance Liaptcheff's International Save the Children Union - Bulgarian branch was not limited to Sofia, and Dr. Hadzhiangelova was indeed a board member of a hospice for the elderly, but only in her native Stara Zagora.

A look at other social networks suggests yet other motives for bestowing the honor. The twelve honored women had blood ties with the political elite, and especially with the notable families of Bourmov, Danev, Dzhubarov, Dzhoumaliev, Entchev, Liaptcheff, Malinov, Paprikov, Petrovitch, Provadaliev, Radoslavov, Ryaskov, Saraivanov, Smilov, Fanta, Tchakalov, etc. Half of them were daughters of *apostles of freedom*, i.e. persons active in the revolutionary events of the Late Bulgarian Revival period. Through the men next to them, they were drawn in the orb of several parties of the right-of-center: Democratic, Progressive Liberal, Liberal and Peoples-Liberal, and after 1920 – the United Peoples'-Progressive Party and the Democratic Alliance. The honors were bestowed during the term of the Democratic Alliance Mayors.

Some of the women were connected through educational networks: two of them, Theodora Paprikova and Penka Gheorghieva, had attended the American College for Girls in Constantinople, and Julia Malinova sent her daughter to it; the husbands of Dona Karandzhoulouva and Trayana Dimtcheva were the Robert College graduates, and the husbands of Constance Liaptcheff and Rada Daneva were of the Free University of Political and Economic Sciences.

There were also interest-based social networks in which the mentioned twelve women would often cross paths: ten of them were co-members of the “Samarjanka” (Samaritan Woman) Society, six, of the “Eudoxia” Society, five in the Union of Sofia Charity Societies, four (though not the same four), in the Bulgarian Red Cross, the “Mayka” (Mother) Women’s Society, the Macedonian Women’s Union, and the Slavic Conversation Society; three – in the Bulgarian Women’s Union, the “Milosardie” (Compassion) Philanthropic Society (Sofia), and the “Saznanie” (Consciousness) Educational Society. All that should convince us that we are dealing with a group, the members of which would know each other well and often would collaborate for considerable periods of time in the same associations.

Information on the professional and interest groups networks of the fathers, husbands, sons and sons-in-law of the honored women would further flesh out the picture of internal social exchange among them. These were families that would have kinships and relationships with a great number of their business partners, in the framework of a limited number of entrepreneurial, banking, credit and insurance institutions: the National Bank of Bulgaria, “Girdap” Bank, Bulgarian Macedonian Bank, Franco-Belgian and Balkan Bank (a French-Bulgarian bank for international trade), Credit Bank, the Union of Popular Banks, the Clerks’ Co-operative, Savings and Insurance Society, insurance societies “Balkan” and “Orel” (Eagle), and the Bulgarian Commercial Steamboat Society⁸.

There was also the connection via the membership in Bulgarian chapters of international societies: seven of the women were in the Bulgarian Red Cross, and four, in the Society against Tuberculosis in Bulgaria.

There had been in Sofia other prominent philanthropists and public figures: the princesses Marie-Louise (1870-1899) and Clementine (1817-1907), the queens Eleonore (1860-1917) and Giovanna (1907-2000), public figure Yordanka Filaretova (1843-1915), teacher Nedelya Petkova (1826-1894), writer Eugenia Mars (1877-1945), journalist Lydia Chichmanoff (1866-1937), teachers and feminist leaders Ekaterina Karavelova (1860-1947) and Dimitrana Ivanova (1881-1950), etc. There were streets and squares in Sofia named after some of them, and some had had jubilee celebrations. Quite a number of these women were alive and active in the 1930s. So it will not be reasonable to accept that the inclusion of

⁸ See М. Иванов, *Мрежовият капитализъм. Българска търговска банка и нейните сродни дружества 1890-1914*. София, Гутенберг, 2010; М. Иванов, Г. Ганев. *Бизнес елитите на България, 1912-1947, 1989-2005*. София, Изток-Запад, 2009, с. 19-66.

women in the so-called reputational elites through honorary citizenship was done solely on the basis of their philanthropic work.

We could come to a similar conclusion should we compare that group with the group of women included in the *Bulgarian Encyclopaedia* of the the Danchoff Brothers⁹. In the *Encyclopaedia*, the women with professions and high education predominate (61 percent) at the expense of the relatively small number of representatives of the monarchic institution (35 percent), and the charities – (2 percent)¹⁰. Thus, we could formulate the hypothesis that these women were made honorary citizens of Sofia not only due to their own activity, but also due to the social position that the men close to them had, or had had.

The women honorary citizens in the urban space

In the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, in the urban space of Sofia, following a foreign model, special *charity quarters* were built, in order to concentrate charity institutions. The first site was in the northern part of the city, in the quarter of Banishora, nearing the Lion Bridge and the Central Train Station. Consecutively, there were built the Clementine Hospital (1891), the Maternal Hospital (1903), the “Prince Boris of Tarnovo” Orphanage of the “Milosardie” (Compassion) Society (1911), and the Young Workers’ Home “Nashe Ogniste” (Our Fireplace) of the International Save the Children Union - Bulgarian branch (1929). Theodora Paprikova, princess Eudoxia and Constance Liaptcheff, who figure in the honored citizens’ list, had been active in these projects.

From the beginning of the 20th century, social institutions began to be concentrated in the southwestern part of the city. Before the Liberation (1878) that space was out of town borders, beyond the embankment, but in the next three decades a gradual urbanization began. The Russian Monument was erected there (1882), followed by the Military Camp (today’s quarter *Lagera (Camp)*), the Alexandrovska Hospital (1884), the Divisional Hospital (1891, today’s Academy of Military Medicine), the Red Cross Hospital (1909, today Pirogov Hospital), the

⁹ Н. Данчов, Ив. Данчов (съст.) *Българска енциклопедия*, т.1-2. София, Ст. Атанасов, 1936.

¹⁰ Ж. Назърска. Образованите жени като част от българските елити с репутация през XX в.: включване в биографични публикации, В: С. Явашчев, Ж. Назърска, М. Станева (съст.) *Съвременни визии за изследване, преподаване и популяризиране на българското културно-историческо наследство*. София, За буквите-О писменехъ, 2014, с. 129-144.

School for Nurses (1912), the Jewish Memorial Hospital (1934). Gradually, the Jewish Cemetery along today's the Macedonia Bld. and the Knyazhevski Road were razed¹¹. In the 1910s-1920s the Municipality of Sofia purposefully allocated pieces of land in that vicinity to charities and religious institutions. In this way the quarter became specific and recognizable on the "mental maps" of Sofia citizens.

First of all, that quarter was a sacred space. Since the 17th century, it was the starting point for the Muslim khanqah in the hamlet of Bali Effendi (today's Knyazhevo quarter), where each spring all the inhabitants of Sofia would freely gather. Near the site of the Russian Monument was built the Greek Orthodox church St George (1904), the Bulgarian Orthodox church St George (1909), the Greek (Uniate) Catholic church "Dormition of the Mother of God" (1924) and the Orthodox "Intercession of the Theotokos" (1929)¹².

That space became the object of a secondary consecration, due to the philanthropic institutions for the needy young and elderly. The Protestant orphanage "St Patrick" (1904-1915), governed by the Irishman Pierce Charles de Lacy O'Mahony, was located in a building West of the Russian Monument, financed by the Balkan Committee in London¹³. On the same street was the "Vseh skorbyastih radost" (Joy of all Who Sorrow) Old People's Home (1914)¹⁴. After the First World

¹¹ Г. Георгиев, *София и софиянци, 1878-1944. Изследване*. София, Наука и изкуство, 1983, с. 10, 21, 83-84, 140.

¹² After the demolition (1910) of the Armenian church opposite the St Nedelya cathedral, in 1917 the municipal authorities proposed to the Armenian community a new site near the Russian Monument; however, that proposal was soon revised. The Armenians finally in-built for themselves a chapel at the ground floor of the newly built (1936) Armenian House on Nishka Street (today's Todor Alexandrov Boulevard); Ж. Назърска, *Религиозното културно-историческо наследство в политиката на Софийската община (края на XIX-средата на XX в.)*, В: *Обществото на знанието и хуманизмът на XXI век*. София: За буквите-О писменехъ, 2012, с. 222-229. With that chapel and the Jewish People's House, built in 1921, on Princess Klementina Boulevard (today at 62, Alexandar Stamboliyski Boulevard), a periphery of the Russian Monument neighborhood was formed.

¹³ Б. Мандушев, *Основаването на Сиропиталището „Св. Патрикий“ в София*. София, Ножаров, 1905.

¹⁴ Р. Стоянова, „Всех скорбящих радость“ – фондация. Във: В. Николова, Р. Стоянова (съст.) *Енциклопедия на Дарителството*, т. 1. София, Български дарителски форум, 2011, с. 138-146; Ж. Назърска, *Окультизъм, благотворителност и обществено служене: моменти от ранната история на Бялото братство*, В: Ст. Рускова, (съст.) *II. Дъгнов, Учителя, в културното пространство на България*. Варна, Арт Трейсър, 2019, с. 7-24.

War, in the immediate vicinity, several orphanages were built: “Otets Paisii” (Father Paisii) of the First Evangelical Congregational church (1925), “Bitolya” of the Women’s Macedonian Society (1926)¹⁵, “Queen Eleanore” of the Jewish community¹⁶, and “Rodina” (Homeland) of the society of the same name (1930)¹⁷. By the middle of the 20th century, in the neighborhood were also established the War Invalids’ House (23, Skobelev Blvd.), and in 1941, the Nursing Home of the “Eudoxia” Society (Dimitar Nestorov Blvd., today 11, Ivan E. Gueshoff Blvd.)¹⁸. Most of the honored women had been active in the establishment and development of these institutions¹⁹.

At present, the so-called charity quarters have long gone, most of the orphanages and hospices have been destroyed either by the bombings of 1943-1944, or purposefully, later. As to the ones that remained, they are not marked in any way as „lieux de mémoire“. Exceptions are the Medical College, which is named after Yordanka Filaretova; and a today’s kindergarten’s name is “Rodina” (Homeland),

¹⁵ Е. Янева, Сиропиталище „Битоля“ (1903-1947), *Балканистичен форум*, 1999, N 1-2-3, с. 239-240.

¹⁶ ЦДА, ф. 264к, оп. 5, а.е. 1670, л. 1-131. It was founded in 1915; before moving into the new building, it was located on Pirotka Street.

¹⁷ ЦДА, ф. 1386, оп.1, а.е. 226, л.19-27; *Литературен свят*, 1938, N 9-10.

¹⁸ В. Ковачева-Маркова, Софийските ясли на Дружество „Евдокия“, *Сердика*, 1938, N 3, с. 25-29; Р. Михайлов, Нова сграда „Ясли“ на Дружество „Евдокия“, *Сердика*, 1939, N 3, с. 30-33; П. Х., „Яслите“ на дружество „Евдокия“, *Сердика*, 1941, N 1, с. 32-35.

¹⁹ The “Julia Malinova” Shelter for educated solitary women was not situated in the charity quarters described above. A third charity neighborhood started to take shape in the 1930s, along the Knyazhevo Road (today the Brothers Buxton Blvd.). Initially, it was a loosely populated area, with mills, farms, and private villas. After 1919, it was populated by refugees from Macedonia, immigrant Armenians and Russians. Among the charity institutions in today’s quarters “Buxton”, “Pavlovo”, and “Knyazhevo”, were the House of Russian Invalid Veterans (1921), The House of Humanity of the Society against Child Delinquency (1926), The “Anka Gueshova” Home for Girls, governed by its Board (1935), the School for Deaf Children (1941), numerous resting homes in Knyazhevo and Bankya. In 1935, Stoyan Vatralski, journalist and religious activist, domiciled in that neighborhood, made a will to establish a hospice for “veteran intellectuals”. ЦДА, ф. 165, оп. 6, а.е. 85; Д. Божков, Духовно и материално завещание на Ст. Ватралски, *Мир*, N 11438, 10.10.1935. The development of a charity quarter in the southwest part of the city stopped after 1944, when, with the changeover to totalitarian power, some of the donators were interned or executed, and the institutions shut down in 1950-1951.

the name of one of the orphanages. Thus, the “sites of memory” already function in the direction of oblivion.

The same can be said of the “sites of memory” connected to the women honorary citizens of the capital. There is no memorial plate for any one of them, nor a monument; no such initiatives have come, for example, from the Municipality of Sofia (or from elsewhere). Some of the fathers and husbands do have monuments, like Alexander Malinov, Stoyan Danev and Andrey Liaptcheff. There is no trace of the fact that the women we have talked about had been bearers of the sign of honorary citizens of Sofia on their tombstones in the Central Sofia Cemetery, nor on handouts concerning the city.

Conclusion

From the account so far, it becomes clear that the women in question were selected in the 1930s by the municipality authorities to be awarded the sign of honorary citizens of Sofia predominantly due to their traditional roles of spouses and housewives, also suited for the typically “gender role” of philanthropists. Such motives derive from sexual stereotyping and sustain it in practice.

The “reputational elites” formed in this way are small in numbers. Outside of them remain women with outstanding professional achievements, recognized at home and abroad, who had been included into the “reputational elites” by other ways: being awarded orders and medals by the state, having entered the “canon” of literature, having received awards in scientific and literary competitions, having had streets and institutions named after them, etc.²⁰

The women bearers of the honorary sign were mostly housewives with no money of their own, who would therefore give to charities only with the permission or the encouragement of their close male relatives, often in the service of the men’s political causes. That makes them in practice, as wives and daughters, part of male projects. It is not accidental that they understood that and thought the award unusual. Dona Karandzhoulouva said: “I hardly merit that (...) As a patriot’s daughter and patriot’s wife, I have always endeavored to follow their example and have

²⁰ Ж. Назърска, *Образованите жени; Eadem, Елити и символен капитал: българските жени като част от националните елити с репутация, XX-XXI в.*, В: *Обществото на знанието и хуманизмът на XXI век.* София, За буквите-О писменехъ, 2014, с. 230-237.

worked not for awards, but just to be useful and add my personal contribution for the good of our people”²¹.

An overall look at that group of women would reveal that its members often lacked wide popularity, being known only in selected professional and political *milieux*. Therefore, their philanthropy and charity notwithstanding, the choice to honor them would be in connection to the various political, educational and cultural networks of the men close to them.

Until 1944, the women honorary citizens would be “visible” in the social space of Sofia, participating in many and multifarious public societies and espousing for long periods of time the cause of various wronged social groups (women, refugees, children, elderly, disabled). That “visibility” had been in focus in the city space as long as the “charity quarters” subsisted. The fact that these bearers of a sign of honor are forgotten today is not to be wondered at, after half a century of state domination in the sphere of social activity, plus the absence of their “sites of memory” in Sofia: no memory plates, no street or institution names, nothing in the exposition of the Regional Historic Museum of Sofia.

As an institution, connected to symbolic capital, the honorary citizenship of Sofia was a sign of the belated and difficult modernization of Bulgarian society. Now, as in the past, honorary citizenship remains a “male” institution. Bulgarian women get access to it in the 1930s, without any significant change in subsequent decades. During the period 1944-1989, when the state had usurped the position of sole owner of symbolic capital, there were very few women to be awarded that honor; when that changed, in the last 25 years there is some growth in numbers.

Appendix

Prosopographic data on the women awarded the Sign of Honorary Citizenship of Sofia

Desha Ryaskova-Stantcheva (1858, Gabrovo – 1956, Sofia) – graduated in pedagogy in Russia; was a high school teacher in Gabrovo, Varna and Sofia. Member of: “Ekaterina Simidchieva” Society of Macedonian Women; societies “Mayka” (Mother) – Varna, “Samaryanka” (Samaritan Woman), and “Slivnitsa”. Husband – Petar Stantchev, MP, Liberal Party politician²².

²¹ ДА – София, ф. 1к, оп. 2, а.е. 305, л. 8.

²² ЦДА, ф. 1267к, оп.1, а.е. 8, л. 1-1рр.

Dona Kraychova-Karandzhoulova (1869, village of Zhelyava, vicinity of Sofia – 1934, Sofia) – member of: Macedonian Women’s Society, Society for the “Bitolya” Orphanage, the Bulgarian Red Cross, societies “Samaryanka” (Samaritan Woman), “Mayka” (Mother) – Sofia, “Eudoxia”, and “Milosardie” (Compassion); Bulgarian Women’s Union. Father – Toné Kraychov, apostle of freedom, then exiled, then MP. Husband – Ivan Karandzhoulov, activist of the Macedonian emigration²³.

Elena Valtcheva-Tchakalova (1875, Pleven – 1948, Sofia) – graduate of the Gymnasium for Girls in Veliko Tarnovo; primary school teacher in Pleven. Member of: “Samorazvitiie” (Self-development) Society – Pleven, Bulgarian Women’s Union, “Ekaterina Simidchieva” Society of Macedonian Women, societies “Saznanie” (Consciousness) and “Mayka” (Mother) – Sofia, Slavic Society, Bulgarian Red Cross, “Samaryanka” (Samaritan Woman), “Vseh skorbyastih radost (Joy of All Who Sorrow), the “Julia Malinova” Shelter for educated solitary women, “Traen mir” (Durable Peace). Husband – Christo Tchakalov, financier, Chair of the National Bank of Bulgaria²⁴.

Princess Eudoxia (1898, Sofia – 1985, Friedrichshafen, Germany) – an artist. Patroness of the societies: Women Artists’ Section at the Bulgarian Association of University Women, “Eudoxia” Society, International Save the Children Union – Bulgarian branch, orphanages “Prince Boris of Tarnovo” and “Queen Eleonore”. Father – King Ferdinand I, brother – King Boris III.

Constance Petrovitch – Liaptcheff (1887, Rousse – 1942, Sofia) – graduate of a Gymnasium for Girls in Sofia; Bulgarian delegate at the Social Questions Commission at the League of Nations. Member of: International Save the Children Union – Bulgarian branch; homes “Nashe Ogniste” (Our Fireplace) and “Save the Children”, the “Mayka i dete” (Mother and Child) Committee. Husband – Andrey Liaptcheff, financier, Democratic Party and Democratic Alliance politician, prime minister²⁵.

Maria Dayrova-Hadzhiangelova (1876, Stara Zagora – 1943, Sofia) – graduated in medicine (Nancy); school doctor and private practitioner in Stara Zagora

²³ ДА – София, ф. 1к, оп. 2, а.е. 305, л. 8-9.

²⁴ ЦДА, ф. 866к, оп.2,а.е.1, л. 1-2гр.; ф. 264к, оп. 2, а.е. 29, л. 43; ф. 156к, оп.1, а.е. 18; ДА – София, ф. 3к, оп.1, а.е. 95, л. 2-22; а.е.307, л. 5-6; *Годишен отчет на Софийско женско дружество „Съзнание“*. София, Графика, 1934, с. 3; *Женски глас*, N 1-2, 20.09.1932.

²⁵ Цв. Кьосева, Констанца Ляпчева – живот в името на децата, В: *Eadem, Първите дами на Царска България*. София, УИ, ДАА, НИМ, 2010, с. 119-126.

and Sofia, Assistant Professor at Sofia University, Chief Inspector-Physician at the Ministry of Education, journalist. Member of: Society for Pathology and Anatomy, Bulgarian Women's Union, "Samaryanka" (Samaritan Woman) and "Dobrii samarianin" (The Good Samaritan) – Stara Zagora. Husband – Dr. Petko Hadzhianguelov, lawyer²⁶.

Penka Radoslavova-Gheorghieva (1888, Varna – 1981, Sofia) – studied at the American College for Girls in Constantinople. Member of: Bulgarian Women's Union; Bulgarian Red Cross; societies "Samaryanka" (Samaritan Woman), "Lyubov kam rodinata" (Love for Homeland), "Rodina" (Homeland) Orphanage, Bulgarian Slavic Women's Group. Father – Vassil Radoslavov, politician and prime minister. Husband – Dr. Hristo Gheorghiev – doctor, member of the governing body of the Bulgarian Red Cross²⁷.

Rada Bourmova-Daneva (1868, Constantinople – 1952, Sofia) – member of: Society Against Tuberculosis, Union of Invalid Officers – Ladies' Committee, Russo-Bulgarian Committee for Aid to Russian Refugees, Bulgarian Red Cross, Women's Macedonian Society, societies "Zdravets" (Geranium), "Mayka" (Mother) – Sofia, and "Samaryanka" (Samaritan Woman), "Eudoxia" Society and Nursing Home. Father – Todor Bourmov, politician and prime minister. Husband – Dr. Stoyan Danev – lawyer, Progressive-Liberal Party politician, prime minister²⁸.

Rada Guerassimova-Angelova (1887, Sofia - ?) – graduate in history (Sofia University), high school teacher in Sofia. Member of the Bulgarian Women's Union²⁹.

Theodora (Todorka) Entcheva-Paprikova (1869, Toulcha – 1943, Sofia) – alumna of the American College for Girls of Constantinople. Member of: societies "Milosardie" (Compassion) and "Mayka" (Mother) – Sofia and "Eudoxia", "Prince Boris of Tarnovo" orphanage, the Nursing Home. Husband – General Stefan Paprikov, military officer and Democratic Party politician, Minister of War³⁰.

²⁶ Ж. Божилова-Патева, Венец от неувяхващи цветя, *Вестник на жената*, N 951, 1.12.1943; ДА – София, ф. 3к, оп. 1, а.е. 95, л.3, 7; Е. Чакалова. Дружество „Самарянка“, В: Е. Марс (съст.) *Полувековна България*. София, 1928, с. 272-273; *Алманах на Софийския университет, 1888-1939*. София, 1940.

²⁷ ДА – София, ф. 1к, оп. 2, а.е. 305, л. 5; а.е. 303, л.2-2а, 8-8гр.; ЦДА, ф. 264к, оп.6, а.е. 39, л. 21-22.

²⁸ ДА – София, ф. 1к, оп. 2, а.е. 305, л.1-2гр.; В. Николова, Жената на политика. Рада Данева (1868 – 1952), *Исторически преглед*, 2005, N 5 – 6, с. 171-183.

²⁹ *Женски глас*, N 1-2, 20.09.1932.

³⁰ ДА – София, ф.1к, оп. 2, а.е. 305, л. 4.

Trayana Dimcheva (born in Stara Zagora) – teacher and journalist. Member of: societies “Bulgarian Woman”, “Eudoxia”, “Bitolya” Macedonian Woman’s Orphanage. Husband – Vassil Dimchev, MP, journalist, People’s Party and Democratic Alliance politician, activist of the Bulgarian Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Committee³¹.

Julia Scheider – Malinova (1869, Odessa – 1955, Sofia) – studied dentistry in France, translator, and journalist. Member of: Bulgarian Women’s Union, Bulgarian Red Cross, “Obstestvena podkrepa” (Public support) Union, the “Zhenski trud” (Women’s Labor) Bureau, societies “Saznanie” (Consciousness), “Zdravets” (Geranium), “Milosardie” (Compassion) and “Mayka” (Mother) – Sofia, “Samaranyanka” (Samaritan Woman), the “Prince Boris of Tarnovo” Orphanage, and the “Julia Malinova” Shelter for educated solitary women. Husband – Alexander Malinov – lawyer, Democratic Party and Democratic Alliance politician, prime minister³².

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³¹ *Женски глас*, N 1-2, 20.09.1932.I

³² *ДА* – София, ф.1к, оп. 2, а.е. 305, л. 11; K. Daskalova, Julia Malinova (also Julie Malinoff) (1869-1953), In: Fr. de Haan, K. Daskalova and A. Loutfi (eds.) *A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms. Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe (19th and 20th Centuries)*. Budapest, New York, Central European University Press, 2006, p. 293-295.

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Georgeta Nazarska

State University of Library Studies and IT
119 Tsarigradsko shose Blvd., Sofia
Bulgaria
georgeta.nazarska@gmail.com

PROTESTANTS IN A BALKAN TOWN: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARIES AMONG THE BULGARIANS IN BITOLA (19th – EARLY 20th CENTURY)¹

Elmira Vassileva

Abstract: *The most influential Protestant society which operated in the Ottoman Empire was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Its mission station in Monastir (Bitola) was active from 1873 to 1920. There were several aspects of the Protestant activities in the town: evangelistic, educational, literary, medical and relief work. The mission was oriented predominantly towards the Bulgarian population. In addition, the Americans attempted to widen their missionary field, the Albanians being the most responsive. The greatest achievements of the Protestant Mission in Bitola were the establishment of the American Girls' Boarding School and the Bulgarian Evangelical Church.*

Keywords: *American Protestant Missionaries, Bulgarians, Monastir (Bitola)*

During the heyday of the American missionary efforts in the 19th century, various Protestant societies targeted the lands of the Ottoman Empire. The most influential one among them was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), whose representatives worked in the Middle East and in the Balkans from 1819 onwards. After abortive attempts to preach among Muslims and Jews, they focused their efforts on the Christians in the Orient, including the Balkan population as well. The strongholds supporting the activities of the American Board were its stations or the settlements where the missionaries were accommodated and from where

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they set off for their tours of the surrounding areas. Station locations were carefully selected after preliminary tours of investigation and after taking into account all factors that would affect the missionary work. The penetration in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire began already with the setting up of a station in Constantinople in 1831 but essentially the work commenced in the 1850s and 1860s, after the organization of the mission centres in Adrianople (Edirne), Eski Zagra (Stara Zagora), Philippopolis (Plovdiv) and Samokov. In 1870 what was then referred to as the ABCFM European Turkey Mission was established as a separate unit. The aim of the article is to trace the development of the missionary activities at the mission station in Monastir (Bitola) launched in 1873 in an attempt to determine its significance for the town and its residents. The study is based primarily on the letters and annual reports of the missionaries who worked in Monastir from 1873 until the end of World War I.

Although they never abandoned completely their utopian ideas for converting Jews and Muslims, the main goal of the Americans from the European Turkey Mission became the spread of Protestantism among the Christians in the Ottoman territories, with particularly great hopes pinned on the Bulgarians². The zeal for literature and education in the native language typical of the Bulgarians' National Revival, as well as their struggle for church independence were skillfully used by the missionaries, who saw there an opportunity for overall evangelization of the nation by creating a reformed Bulgarian church. The establishment of the independent Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 put an end to this ambition, but not to the

² On the American Protestant missions among the Bulgarians see У. У. Хол, *Пуритани на Балканите*. София, Изд. Нов човек, 2008; М. Стоянов, Начало на протестантската пропаганда в България, *Известия на Института по история*, N 14-15, 1964, с. 45-67; П. Шопов, Пропагандната и просветна дейност на американските библейски общества в българските земи през XIX в., *Известия на Института по история*, N 23, 1974, с. 149-184; Х. Христов, Протестантските мисии в България през XIX в., *Годишник на Духовната академия „Св. Климент Охридски“*, том 26, 3, 1976/ 1977; Т. 27, 3, 1977/ 1978; П. Петков, Американски мисионери в българските земи (XIX – началото на XX в.), *Исторически преглед*, 5, 1990, с.18-32; Т. Несторова, *Американски мисионери сред българите 1858-1912*. София, УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 1991; В. Трайков, Протестантски мисионери на Балканите и българите (до 1878 г.), В: И. Илчев, П. Митев (ред.) *Българо-американски културни и политически връзки през XIX и първата половина на XX в.* София, УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2004; Ив. Илчев, П. Митев, *Докования до Америка (XIX – началото на XX в.)*. София, Фондация „Хемимонт“, 2003; Джеймс Ф. Кларк, *Американците откриват българите 1834-1878 г.* София, АИ „Проф. Марин Дринов“, 2013.

efforts to reach, through evangelical sermon, as many people as possible. Although their followers were not numerous, they set about to establish evangelical churches (the first one being set up in Bansko in 1871) that maintained the spirit of the emerging Bulgarian Protestant community, while the missionaries readjusted their tactics and methods and at the same time sought to break new missionary field.

With a view to expanding the activities by targeting Macedonia, in the summer of 1873 the missionaries George Marsh, John Baird, William Locke and James Clarke undertook a tour of investigation to identify a suitable location for a new station of the European Turkey Mission. After the rejection of Skopje and Veles as unhealthy places and of Prilep as an overly small one with poor location, the choice fell on Monastir (Bitola)³. The town was selected as the centre of missionary activities for several reasons. According to J. Clarke the place was healthy, situated at the mouth of a river providing plenty of water, in a vast fertile plain surrounded by high mountains⁴. Furthermore, Monastir was a military and administrative centre and there were hopes that a railroad would be built in the near future that would ensure easier access. Most important was the population, which, according to the Americans, at that time numbered about 30,000 people, half of whom were Muslims, the majority of the rest being Christians, and there were quite a few Jews as well. Some 2,000 persons out of the Christians were Bulgarians, while the rest claimed that they were Greeks. According to the missionaries however there were hardly any genuine Greeks in the town and most of the people in this group were in fact Hellenized Bulgarians, as were almost all the inhabitants of South Macedonia as well. In addition, they believed that as a result of the conflict with the Greek Patriarch and being attracted by the progress of their own nation in terms of social status and educational level, these people would increasingly feel no shame in calling themselves "Bulgarians". All this implied that the mission station in Monastir would have its successes, and the Americans, who already had considerable experience drawn from their activities among the Bulgarians, got the opportunity to work in a seemingly promising field that was new to them and that still enabled them to attempt preaching in Turkish, Greek and Albanian as well.

When a suitable home was secured, in the autumn of 1873 two missionary families arrived in Monastir (Baird and Jenney) and began their work following practices already established by the mission. Initially, it was most important to

³ Annual Report of Monastir Station for the year ending June 18th, 1874, *Централен државен архив (ЦДАА)*, КМФ19, ИНВ. № 550/2.

⁴ The New Station – Monastir. Religious Condition of the Bulgarians, *Missionary Herald*, 1, 1874, p. 20.

acquire the ability to make direct contact with people by learning their language, to which they dedicated the entire first year of their stay in the town. According to their preliminary plans, John Baird had to devote himself to Turkish language and Edward Jenney to Bulgarian. They very soon realized that it would be far more useful for both of them to study Bulgarian, as it was the language of a sizeable part of the villagers in the surrounding areas and at the same time most of the Turks used it quite willingly as well⁵.

Initially, the missionaries were well received by the local population, which believed that they had come solely to open a school and to educate them. According to E. Jenney the town dwellers called them missionaries without understanding the meaning of the word and he feared that once they became aware of the nature of their mission, their attitude would change⁶. The Americans dedicated almost the entire first year of their stay there to learning the language and did not have many opportunities to pursue real missionary work. Still, aided by a local collaborator, they conducted regular Sunday services and prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings at Baird's home. In the beginning they attracted curious people and the average number of the attendees was about 60, but soon the interest waned, so the regular attendees to these gatherings were between 5 and 25 individuals⁷. However, the missionaries were pleased even with the small number of interested people, who "Bible in hand, study the Word of God" and opened a Sunday school for them, hoping that it would help awaken the local people. The attendance was not greater than that of the religious services, but the fact that those present had surmounted the superstition that no work should be done on the "day of the saints" was considered a positive sign.

In addition to preaching at their home, the missionaries were looking for all kinds of other preaching options. Typical traits of their work were the individual approach to the local residents and their attempts to reach as many people as possible. Therefore, in order to communicate with the locals, they visited the Christian Orthodox churches and schools, as well as other public places, such as cafés. Thus, they frequented the marketplace, with the New Testament in hand, using every opportunity to start discussions on the matters of faith with individuals or whole groups. They also undertook fairly regular tours of the surrounding villages and towns, where they proceeded in the same way. Of primary importance

⁵ Annual Report of Monastir Station for the year ending June 18th, 1874.

⁶ Arrivals, *Missionary Herald*, 2, 1874, pp. 58-59.

⁷ *The Annual Reports of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, Boston, 1874, p. 10.

for the implementation of the evangelistic activity was the provision of bibles and other printed matter released by the Protestant publishing centre of the mission in Constantinople (Istanbul). For example, the Protestant newspaper *Zornitsa* was very popular. The publications were distributed both by the missionaries themselves during their tours and by colporteurs specially appointed for that purpose by the station. It is beyond doubt that the missionary literary initiatives were quite popular, and the Americans hoped to achieve two things thereby: to disseminate knowledge and to attract new followers.

The results of this approach yielded no significant quantitative magnitude and usually the missionaries' only hope was that they had managed to sow the seed of doubt that would give rise to a desire to seek the truth. This was largely dependent on the personal qualities and perseverance of the missionary, who was often confronted not merely with disinterest, but even with overt hostility as well, provoked mostly by the Christian Orthodox clergy. That hostility began to diminish over time, but this failed to entail massive spread of Protestantism. The missionaries found their explanation and believed that even though they had reached the hearts of many, the latter did not change their church affiliation openly, as this was considered shameful.

Parallel with that, the missionary wives, who were trying to establish contact with the women in the town, were quite important as well. For example, Ellen Baird managed to bring together a circle of interested women in Monastir, whom she visited once a week together with her servant Vasilica to read and explain the Bible⁸. The mission was subsequently joined by a Bulgarian girl, Maria Raicheva from Sliven, who had graduated from the American Girls' School in Samokov and who facilitated the work among the women contributing substantially to the significant increase in interest⁹. This activity was regarded as very important, because it was among the females that the missionaries encountered the most vehement resistance in the beginning, as they sincerely believed that their men became Protestant converts via some magic.

In 1883, the family of the missionary Louis Bond was enrolled in the station. His wife, also a missionary dedicated to the cause, introduced a new aspect to the work by providing medical services to the local population. On some days she managed to examine up to forty patients, mostly females, offering advice that

⁸ Annual Report of Monastir Station for the year ending July 8th 1875, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550-2.

⁹ Annual Report of Monastir Station E. Turkey, April 18th 1879, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550-2.

was apparently clearly appreciated by many¹⁰. According to the missionary reports, in 1891 she successfully cured even the Russian Vice Consul. This activity gained her considerable popularity, which was used for attaining missionary goals. When one of Mrs. Bond's female patients invited her and her husband to attend a family celebration on St George's Day, the occasion was used by the missionaries to preach and present their practices to the assembled relatives and friends of the hosts, which they evidently followed with interest¹¹. Mrs. Bond's medical efforts persisted as an integral part of the station's work until 1904 when the Bonds withdrew from the mission.

Gradually, the activities of the mission were expanded, followers were won over and missionary out-stations were created. In the 1880s and 1890s out-stations of the Monastir station were established in Strumitsa, Monospitovo, Murtino, Radovish, Raklish, Velusa, Vodena (Edessa), Yenidje Vardar (Yannitsa) and Prilep, and there were also individual followers of evangelism in Kukush or Kelkitch (Kilkis), Tikvesh, Kavadartsi, Resen, Kupruli (Veles), Uscub (Skopje), Prishtina and others. They were regularly visited by the American missionaries, who took at least one, but in most of the cases several tours of their field a year. During the rest of the time the out-stations were taken care of by local preachers, who received salaries for their activities from the budget of the mission station in Monastir. Such was, for example, Samuil Zurnev, who was of Gypsy origin and initially worked as a colporteur for the station, but later on was appointed a preacher simultaneously in Vodena and Yenidje Vardar. At some of the out-stations the work was more successful and at others less so. In 1891 Protestant churches were organized in the best developing communities in Radovish, Strumitsa and Monospitovo¹². Elementary schools were also opened at some of the out-stations (first in Radovish and Monospitovo), where the teachers also received their remuneration from the mission station. An increased interest on the part of the missionaries in working among the Albanians dated back to the end of the 1880s, as they hoped to achieve considerable success there. To this end an out-station was opened in Kortcha, the most remarkable part of its operation being the opening in 1891 and long existence of a school for Albanian girls that was the first of its kind. (Later Elbasan was also made a mission centre and eventually both centres for work among the Albanians were elevated to the status of autonomous stations).

¹⁰ *Annual Report ABCFM*, 1885, p. 26.

¹¹ J. W. Baird to Sec. N. G. Clark, D.D., 9 May 1890, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/9.

¹² Report of Monastir Station for the year ending Apr. 30 1891, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/8.

The missionary efforts were focused mainly on the Bulgarians, as the mission had rich experience of working among them. This however did not preclude the attempts of launching operations along other strands well, if only within the town limits. For example, in the winter of 1887 J. Baird rented a small house in the Gypsy neighborhood of Monastir and took to holding Sunday services there¹³. However, they were not well attended¹⁴ and probably this was the reason why the initiative did not last long. The following year a class of Greek students was opened at the Sunday school taught by Gerasim Kyrias. According to the annual report of the mission, it was attended by 15 to 30 persons. But soon after that G. Kyrias dedicated his efforts to serving among the Albanians working for the British and Foreign Bible Society and this attempt was also abandoned.

A traditional and important aspect of the American Protestant missions in the Ottoman Empire, which contributed substantially to the recruitment of adherents, was the unfolding of educational activities. The missionaries in Monastir also attached attention to this facet and as early as in 1878 they organized a girls' school in the town, albeit with only a few pupils, headed by the station associate Maria Raicheva¹⁵. It had a bearing on their work among women, whose superstitious ignorance was regarded as a major obstacle to the spread of the Gospel and which at the same time was the mainstay of the Christian Orthodox Church. However, the missionaries also saw the provision of girls' education as a free operation field, since in their opinion no significant attention was allotted to female education in general in Monastir at that time.

Initially, the school admitted only day pupils, but already in the following year the missionaries were seriously considering the option of undertaking the enrolment of boarders similarly to the American Girls' School in Samokov. In fact, with a view to achieving missionary results a boarding school was a far more appropriate form of education, as it was easy for the schoolgirls to get used to the "true Christian life", while the religious influence exerted on the day pupils was quickly offset by that of the family environment. In 1880, a parcel of land was purchased for building a boarding house and the required permission was obtained from the Ottoman capital. Two years later, due to the 2,000 Ottoman lira (£) provided by

¹³ Annual Report of Monastir Station for the year ending April 14th 1887, ЦДАА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/4.

¹⁴ European Turkey Mission. From Monastir and out-stations, *Missionary Herald*, 8, 1887, p. 313.

¹⁵ Report of Monastir Station for the year ending Apr. 10, 1880, ЦДАА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/2.

the American Board as well as to additional donations made by the missionaries themselves and by the local Protestants, two solid buildings were erected there: for the needs of the girls' school and as a residence of the missionaries¹⁶.

In the beginning, the teachers there were the missionaries themselves but in 1879 Sophia Crawford was appointed to the Monastir station and she dedicated all her efforts to the school. In 1884, she was replaced by Harriet Cole, who became its principal and remained in that position until 1909. Owing to her perseverance and with the help of her like-minded collaborator Mary Matthews, who joined in later (1888), she managed to turn the American Girls' Boarding School in Monastir not only into the most important part of the missionary work in the town, but also into a respected and sought-after educational institution. In addition to the two female Americans, local girls also took to teaching at the school. Such was, for example, Rada Pavleva, who graduated from the American Girls' School in Samokov in 1884 and the same year took up a job at the Monastir school. There she taught classes, depending on the specific needs, in Bulgarian language, Bible study, exact sciences, history, geography, writing and gymnastics for 25 years (with several breaks when in the United States, where she acquired additional qualification and gained experience as a nurse). In actual fact the non-American teachers at the girls' school in Monastir were in most cases alumnae of the same educational institution or of the other schools of the mission providing education to local girls (most frequently they came from the American Girls' School in Samokov, but some of them were graduates of the American Girls' College in Constantinople), but there were some exceptions as well. For instance, from 1901 till 1903 a teacher of Bulgarian language was Penka Sechanova, who was the daughter of the evangelical pastor in Plovdiv, but had finished a Bulgarian high school in the town.

Female students were accepted in the initial stage (kindergarten), in the preparatory stage and in the class education. A four-year training course was established in the senior stage, where subsequently a fifth year was added (from 1897 onwards). The curriculum included both secular and religious subjects and at least in the beginning there was emphasis on the latter, the desire being to ensure appropriate moral education. Still, the curriculum included Bulgarian and English, mathematics, natural sciences, history and geography, and last but not least gymnastics classes, which clearly distinguished the school from those in the surrounding areas. Special attention was also paid to industrial training including

¹⁶ E. Jenney's report to European Turkey Mission (12 June 1882), *ЦДА*, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/4.

periods in needlework and cooking and sometimes also in special subjects such as bookbinding (during the 1908-1909 school year)¹⁷.

Over time the facilities of the school were expanded and improved. Initially it had only one building, which was also used for prayer meetings and Sunday services of the Protestant community in the town. As the work expanded, the school premises increased with new extension buildings, and subsequently, with the help of donations from local people and others, obtained from the USA, another building was constructed for the needs of the school and yet another, separate one for the needs of the church (1895). American donations were also used to purchase a pipe organ, and over the years the school similarly acquired various equipment for conducting scientific experiments. For example, much excitement in the town was caused by the delivery in 1901 of a model of a human skeleton to illustrate the lessons of physiology. A school library was also organized. All this helped ensure quality and up-to-date education, which, according to the missionaries, was recognized as such by many. Every year the annual exams of the schoolgirls, which were held in public, were attended not only by the families of the girls, but also by prominent citizens of Monastir. Thus, in 1891 the event was attended by representatives of the authorities, all foreign consuls (except the Greek one), the governing bodies of the Bulgarian and Wallachian schools in the town, the Bulgarian archimandrite, etc., and all guests were impressed by the knowledge in Bulgarian and English language demonstrated by the students¹⁸. This was proved by the fact that the Serbian consul requested that his daughters be enrolled as schoolgirls¹⁹.

In the beginning, the instruction was carried out in Bulgarian and English was intensively studied. In the 1898-99 school year, for the purpose of attracting girls of other nationalities as well, it was shifted to an English-language base but Bulgarian was still taught, as it was the language of the majority of the students, as well as of all non-American female teachers. An experiment was made in the following school year by introducing Greek language as part of the education, and to this end a special Greek female teacher, a graduate of the American Missionary School in Smyrna, was invited. But only two of the schoolgirls showed interest in learning the language and the teacher soon left. To the great disappointment of

¹⁷ The data used in presenting the development of the American girls' school in Bitola have been obtained from its annual reports for the period 1880-1909 accessible at: ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/2, 4, 8, 14.

¹⁸ The Girls' Boarding School, *Missionary Herald*, 9, 1891, pp. 374-375.

¹⁹ L. Bond to Sec. N. G. Clark, D.D., 26 June 1891, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/9.

the missionaries, the attempt to enroll more girls of diverse nationalities from the town was not particularly successful. Naturally, every year the student lists included representatives of different ethnic groups, which had to demonstrate the diversity of the work done in the mission's annual reports. But in 1885-1886 period, for example, out of a total of 41 schoolgirls there were 4 Americans, 4 Albanians, 3 Greeks, 3 Gypsies, 3 Wallachians and 25 Bulgarians; on the other hand, for the sake of comparison, in the 1902-1903 school year there were 27 Bulgarians, 3 Albanians, 1 Greek, 5 Wallachians, 1 Serbian, 3 Gypsies and 1 Jew, who attended only English classes. In the 1889-1890 annual report the principal also proudly noted the presence of 3 Turkish girls, at that belonging to prominent families in the town, who stayed for one year and then continued their education at the American Girls' College in Constantinople. A large part of the students at the girls' school came from Protestant families but quite a few Christian Orthodox girls were also attracted and they came not only from Monastir but also from the other places, where the mission operated²⁰. Undoubtedly, its work was most successful among the Bulgarians, as they continued to be a priority for the missionaries²¹, hence it was not accidental that throughout the period prior to the Balkan Wars the Bulgarian element was invariably dominant among the schoolgirls.

Although the school was part of a missionary initiative and its aim was to facilitate the spread of Protestantism, for which it received its annual funding from the so-called Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior (a division of the American Board), the funds provided were by far insufficient for its support and the schoolgirls were obliged to pay a tuition fee. In the 1890s the boarders paid 3 or 4 £ each annually, but as the cost of life went up in the beginning of the new century the required fee was increased to 8 to 10 £. However, not all families were able to provide such an amount, so the payment made by each student depended on the agreement struck by the parents with the school, which made concessions to the poorer ones. For example, the boarders paid the following fees for the 1908-1909 school year: 2 times 10 £ each; 3 times 7 £ each; 2 times 6 £ each; 6 times 5 £ each; 15

²⁰ Over the years, the boarders educated at the American Girls' School in Monastir were girls that came from Voden, Florina, Krushevo, Prilep, Smrdesh, Kavadartsi, Tikvesh, Kukush, Resen, Strumitsa, Radovsh, Monospitovo, Drama, Mehomia (Razlog), Prishtina and Mitrovitsa.

²¹ Report of Monastir Station for the year ending July 12, 1901, *ЦДА*, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/14.

times 4 £ each²². The boarders' fee covered their tuition and nutrition costs. At the same time, all the housework (including clothes washing, ironing, sewing, cooking, cleaning, but not floor washing) was performed by the boarders themselves under the supervision of one of the teachers. According to the school management, this was not only practical, saving the costs for possible hiring of an outsider to do this job, but it was also highly beneficial for the upbringing and development of the girls, who acquired useful habits and skills.

A tuition fee for the day pupils was introduced in the autumn of 1882 in the amount of 1 ½ piastres (*grossi*) a week, which was met with particular dissatisfaction by the local Protestants and some of them even withdrew their children from the school²³. Nonetheless the fee was retained and the established amount was 10 piastres per month for the schoolgirls in the elementary and preparatory department and 20 piastres for the classes. In the early 20th century this amount was reduced to 6 and 12 piastres respectively, and sometimes less than that was charged. The reason for that was the existence of many other schools in the town, which successfully competed with the American one not only because of the fees, but also because of the additional benefits they provided, such as clothes and shoes, and even free lunch²⁴. In fact, the Protestant families in the town were of the opinion that their children's education should be entirely free of charge, but the school made such concessions only in isolated cases. This was not conducive to an increase in the number of the day pupils and in the context of the competition on the part of multiple other educational institutions in the town, this part of the performance of the American school experienced considerable decline (if in the autumn of 1900 the number of the enrolled day pupils was 20, in 1908 it was only 4). However, the usual number of the boarders was sustained (the average number of the boarders was 20-25, with an average total annual number of students of about 40). The missionaries invested special efforts in that respect, and the teachers most regularly spent their summer vacations touring villages and towns for the sake of attracting new schoolgirls.

The main task of the education provided was to train future mission associates, who were expected to work as teachers and Bible workers, or at least to

²² Report of Girls' Boarding School, Monastir, Turkey in Europe, 1908-1909, *ЦДАА*, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/14.

²³ Report of Monastir Station for the year ending June 18th 1883, *ЦДАА*, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/4.

²⁴ L. Bond to Sec. J. W. Barton, 2 October 1900, Monastir, *ЦДАА*, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/15.

promote evangelism in their own homes. Although officially this was not a mandatory condition, practice showed that all boarders graduated from the school as active members of the Protestant church in Monastir (According to the annual reports of the school, only one out of all the girls that completed the full course of study returned to Orthodoxy subsequently). The effect among day pupils was not so considerable, even though the teachers worked hard along these lines both among them and among their families. Yet, in reality the American Girls' School in Monastir proved to be the most productive initiative of the mission station in the town. The school statistics indicate that all of those who completed the full course of education found employment for longer or shorter periods of time as teachers, in most cases at the mission schools, where they not only taught but were engaged in missionary work as well. The graduates of the school also contributed to the Protestant literary activities, with quite a few of them contributing to the newspapers and magazines that were published, and others translating useful treatises and books from English. The majority of the schoolgirls at the American girls' institution in Monastir were Bulgarian, yet, there were representatives of some other nationalities as well. Such were the senior staff of a similar educational institution for Albanian girls located in Kortcha, whose development was quite successful. Another alumnus opened the then only Protestant school for Serbian girls in Prishtina.

Boys' education was not entirely neglected either. In fact, in the very early operational years of the Monastir station the missionaries provided specialized training to some more prominent young men that were to be enrolled in the theological school of the American missionaries in Samokov to undergo the appropriate education for future mission associates. Parallel with that, however, attempts were made to provide general education to the boys from the town. For example, Ms. Fanny Bond managed, in addition to her other activities, to organize biweekly lectures on popular science topics for young people interested in them, who visited the mission home²⁵. Gradually, the girls' school began to enrol young boys up to the age of 12 as well. In 1895 the elementary department of the school was accommodated in one of the rooms of the newly erected mission building, which was to serve as a church of the Protestant community in the town. Actually, a kindergarten for both genders was organized there, but it was not possible to instruct there the available boys from Protestant families aged between 10 and 13.

²⁵ Annual Report of Monastir Station for the year ending April 14th 1887, *ЦДА*, КМФ 19 ИФВ. № 550/4.

After much persuasion Miss H. Cole agreed to admit them to the girls' school, but only for one year²⁶. The idea of the missionaries was that the elementary stage department should develop into an autonomous school for the boys, which would be largely supported by the local Protestants but due to poor community organization it failed. In the autumn of 1897, the youngest schoolgirls were shifted back to the main school building, while the boys were excluded since, relying on their past experience, the female teachers believed that their presence at the girls' school could be dangerous from a moral point of view²⁷. In the autumn of 1899 another attempt was made to open an autonomous boys' school, the teacher there being G. Petrov, who had been appointed preacher at the mission station in Monastir and whose salary consisted partially of contributions made by the members of the evangelical church in the town²⁸. When in the winter of 1901 J. H. House, a missionary from Salonica, visited Monastir in his capacity of a trustee of the girls' school there, he was not particularly impressed by the small boys' school where 10 to 12 children were instructed in not very good conditions²⁹. A separate facility was never secured for the school and it failed to attract many schoolboys. For example, in the autumn of 1901 there were 9 boys enrolled in it but by the end of the school year their number was reduced to merely 5. After the summer of 1903, it ceased to exist.

Apart from the girls' school, the Protestant movement in Bitola did not stand out with any significant developments until the end of the 19th century. Still, the number of the regular attendees of the Sunday services in the 1880s slowly increased and an evangelical community began to gradually take shape in the town. In 1892 a step forward was made in its organization as a Bulgarian Evangelical Church was set up in Monastir, initially with 26 members, who however went up to 42 in the following year³⁰. J. Baird was appointed pastor of the church, but the aim of the missionaries was to burden the local brothers with more responsibili-

²⁶ J. W. Baird to Sec. J. W. Barton, 9 December 1895, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/9.

²⁷ Mary L. Mathews to Sec. J. W. Barton, 18 November 1897, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/12.

²⁸ Report of the Monastir Station for the Year Ending May 1st 1900, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/14.

²⁹ J. H. House to Sec. J. W. Barton, 27 February 1901, Salonica, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/16.

³⁰ Report of Monastir Station Apr. 20 1892 – July 5th 1893, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/8.

ties, while they themselves should be relieved of some duties³¹. The churches established by the missionaries were based on the general congregational principles. They had to consist only of people committed to the Christian way of life, with knowledge about the faith they professed gained from experience. They had to provide service performed by knowledgeable clerics and to cultivate trained and educated laity. Every church was expected to be a free, self-governed and democratically controlled unit³². The missionaries tried their best to encourage the evangelical community in Monastir to be self-supported but it was not easy, as it turned out. The construction, in September 1895, of a detached building for the needs of the church could be considered a success in this respect, since the conducting of religious services and prayer meetings in the building of the girls' school created certain inconvenience. The construction was largely carried out with donations from local Protestants, even though some financial support was also received from the American Board³³.

As a means of intensifying church life, the missionaries initiated the organization of the so-called Christian Endeavor Societies. The Christian Endeavor Movement was one of the characteristics of American evangelism and was quite significant for the unfolding of international missionary work. It was initiated in 1881 by F. E. Clark, a pastor in Portland, Maine, who was looking for a way to engage his young parishioners in church affairs. The main idea of the organization he created was that its members should make a vow obliging them to attend the meetings regularly and to be active in performing various activities related to the church under the guidance of the pastor³⁴. The movement became very popular, it augmented on a national scale and then worldwide, taking a variety of forms but retaining the basic requirement of each member's personal commitment to expressing their religion in practical terms. The missionaries from the Monastir station tried to apply this experience locally and via such societies to harness the local evangelists in serving their neighbour, even in a more global aspect, and thereby to keep the Protestant church in the town vital.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Baird, a missionary society was organized as early as in the 1880s, whose members were the teachers and boarders from the

³¹ L. Bond to Sec. N. G. Clark, D.D., 10 June 1892, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИНВ. № 550/9.

³² Хол, *Пуритани на Балканите*, с. 92.

³³ Report of the Monastir Station for the Three Months ending Dec. 31 1895, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИНВ. № 550/8.

³⁴ H. B. F. MacFarland, The Christian Endeavor Movement, *The North American Review*, Vol. 182, Feb. 1906, pp. 197-198.

school, as well as several women from the town. She held weekly prayer meetings every Friday, as well as monthly meetings for mothers, which discussed issues of child upbringing and relationships with husbands and which enjoyed considerable interest³⁵. In November 1892 a Woman's Christian Endeavor Society was established at the girls' school, which took to conducting weekly meetings. Its members were involved in various charitable initiatives and collected donations that were given to support the Christian cause in different parts of the world. Thus, for example, the amount raised in 1895 was sent to distant China, where it was used to cover the expenses of a student at a Christian girls' *boarding* school³⁶. Subsequently a Junior Endeavor Society was set up, its members being the younger students in the school. They also held their meetings once a week to discuss diverse charitable initiatives. However, this society also had an additional significance, as it was a vehicle for exerting religious influence on the Christian Orthodox day pupils, often with success³⁷. At the end of 1896, a new organization was set up under the name of *Nadezhda (Hope)*, which sought to promote donation raised funds for the development of the church in Monastir³⁸. Each of its members committed to securing a certain monthly amount or producing items to be sold to that end. Along with that the society organized social events (entertainments) for fund raising. There is no doubt that these missionary initiatives helped to promote the spirit of giving among the locals. Thus, in 1898 it was reported that the members of the church donated about 24 Ottoman lira (£) annually in support of its work; The Hope Society: approximately 12 £; The Woman's Christian Endeavor Society raised a small amount, probably about 1 £, and the Girls' School Endeavor Society raised up to 2 £ a year; small amounts were also collected by Mrs. Bond's mothers organization, as well as by the Sunday school classes³⁹.

It should be noted, however, that the women from the Protestant community and especially the teachers and the older school girls were by far more active in this type of activities. Men were difficult to enroll since they had ingrained

³⁵ Annual Report of Monastir Station for the year ending April 14th 1887, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/4.

³⁶ *Annual Report ABCFM 1896*, p. 33.

³⁷ Report of Monastir Girls School, 1892-1893, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/8.

³⁸ Report of Monastir Station for the year ending Apr. 19, 1897, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/8.

³⁹ L. Bond to Sec. J. W. Barton, 20 November 1898, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/9.

antipathy to any sort of pledge⁴⁰. In 1893, an attempt was made to organize a Christian Endeavor Society for men under the guidance of L. Bond, but it failed. In 1899, the society was organized anew and also got involved in charity, promotion of the temperance idea and the like, but it was seemingly by far less active than the women's organization.

Notwithstanding these initiatives, the Protestant church in Monastir failed to establish itself as a stable independent organization. In actual fact, even in its early years its very existence was put to the test due to a severe internal conflict. The reason was the marriage of one of the church members to his mother's cousin who received the blessing of Edward Haskell, a young and inexperienced missionary who was at the time in Monastir to study the local language and gain some work experience⁴¹. The scandal divided and considerably weakened the church as some of its followers split off from it. Ultimately the crisis was surmounted with skill and tact on the part of L. Bond, who agreed to become a pastor on the condition that the church members should apologize in writing to his fellow missionaries E. Haskell and J. Baird, which they did only after some hesitation. Nonetheless, the negative impact of these events was felt long after that and hardly any new members were admitted. According to J. Baird, the native brethren expressed their passive resistance by not making gifts to the church as they ought⁴². They were unable to support their pastor for a long period of time and remained dependent on the mission station.

Financial issues were a major cause of disagreement between the American missionaries and their local associates not only in Monastir. The mission adhered to its principle of paying pastors such salaries as their societies could reasonably be expected to cover in the course of several years of growth and rise⁴³. In J. Baird's opinion, an important condition for the expansion of the churches, which was missing in their missionary field, was that the brethren should learn to give more, and the preachers should learn to live with less⁴⁴. However, the local Protestants

⁴⁰ Report of Monastir Station for the three months ending Dec. 31 1898, ЦДА, КМФ 19 ИИВ. № 550/8.

⁴¹ E. Haskell to Sec. J. W. Barton, 26 June 1896, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/10.

⁴² J. W. Baird to Sec. J. W. Barton, 6 August 1895, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/9.

⁴³ Хол, *Пуритани на Балканите*, с. 148.

⁴⁴ J. W. Baird to Sec. J. W. Barton, 5 November 1894, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/9.

failed to grasp this principle. Thus, in 1892 G. Petrov, a preacher assigned to the Monastir station, left due to poor pay and took up a job with the Bulgarian Exarchate (he became a teacher in Ohrid) in return for twice bigger remuneration, which greatly upset the missionaries⁴⁵.

In addition to these hardships, the missionaries had to cope with the consequences of the severe financial crisis that hit the American Board in the 1890s and affected the Monastir station as well. The reason for this crisis was the economic depression in the United States and the subsequent dramatic decline in fundraising⁴⁶. The European Turkey Mission was forced to cut its costs, so the missionary salaries were reduced by 6 percent in 1891 and by another 10 percent in 1896. However, the financial constraints also affected the station's funds for general missionary work forcing it to dispense with the services of some of its local associates⁴⁷. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that in 1896 the option of altogether abandoning the Monastir station was considered⁴⁸. This did not happen and it continued to exist, but its activities diminished substantially.

In fact, in 1894 the European Turkey Mission decided to set up its own station in Salonica. The city was chosen mainly because of the convenience of the established railways that ensured easier access for the missionaries to their followers in different villages and towns. This necessitated the transfer of the care of the newly created Salonica station to most of the out-stations of the Monastir station (Strumitsa, Monospitovo, Murtino, Radovish, Raklish, Velusa). However, they were also the most productive out-stations, as there were three active evangelical churches there and practically all Bulgarian helpers operated in these settlements. Thus the volume of the work performed by the Americans in Monastir dwindled. The mission estimated that there was no need for two ordained missionaries to serve at the station, so in 1896 the Bairds left the station (they went on furlough to the United States and in the autumn of 1898 settled in Samokov).

The Monastir station was left only to the care of the Bonds and the teachers at the girls' school H. Cole and M. Matthews. They focused their efforts on the maintenance of their remaining three out-stations (Voden, Jenidje Vardar and

⁴⁵ J. W. Baird to Sec. N. G. Clark, D.D., 15 October 1892, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/9.

⁴⁶ Хол, *Пуритани на Балканите*, с. 136-7.

⁴⁷ J. W. Baird to Sec. J. W. Barton, 14 January 1896, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/9.

⁴⁸ J. W. Baird to Sec. J. W. Barton, 2 March 1896, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/9.

Kortcha), as well as on their activities in the town, trying to organize and increase the number of the local Protestants. In the early 20th century, the congregation in Monastir already numbered about 100 people, most of whom were Bulgarians⁴⁹. However, the problems remained the same, and not everything at the station ran smoothly. For example, the confrontation between the Bonds and the American teachers at the girls' school proved to be serious, requiring even the mediation of their fellow missionary from Salonica J. H. House⁵⁰.

The advent of the new century brought new challenges to the missionaries. The unfolding of the missionary work was highly limited by the seething revolutionary activities. It was quite insecure even dangerous to travel, and the globally well-known case of the abduction in August 1901 of Ellen Stone⁵¹, a prominent missionary from the Salonica station of the American Board and her companion Katerina Tsilka disrupted the work of the entire mission. The two women were released six months later after lengthy negotiations and the payment of a large ransom by the Americans, but this story had a negative impact on the missionary work in the Ottoman lands, as the missionaries in Salonica and Monastir were quite constrained in their ability to make tours and preach.

But the most serious tests occurred after the outbreak of the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising in 1903. The new situation led to the suspension of the traditional missionary activities for almost a year, while the Americans devoted their efforts to relief work to help the affected civilian population (Bulgarian and Turkish). Monastir became a distribution centre for the relief arriving from Britain and the United States, and the responsibility for its distribution was shouldered by the missionaries headed by Louis Bond. His principal assistant was Edward Haskell, his fellow missionary from the Salonica station. This humanitarian activity was implemented with the support of the Macedonian Relief Fund set up in Great Britain⁵². The American missionaries were assisted by several British collaborators

⁴⁹ F. Moore, *The Balkan Trail*. London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1906, p. 142.

⁵⁰ J. H. House to Sec. J. W. Barton, 30 March 1898, Salonica, ЦДА, КМФ 19, Инв. № 550/11.

⁵¹ К. Пандев, М. Вапцарова (съст.) *Аферата „Мис Стоун“*. София: Изд. Отечествен фронт, 1983; Л. Б. Шерман, *Пожари в планината. Македонското революционно движение и отвличането на Елен Стоун*. София, Изд. на БАН, 1992; T. Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair. America's First Modern Hostage Crisis*. Simon & Schuster, 2004.

⁵² E. Haskell to Sec. J. W. Barton, 30 November 1903, Salonica, ЦДА, КМФ 19, Инв. № 550/16.

and additionally worked jointly with representatives of the Catholic mission in Salonica and Monastir. Thus, over a period of several months relief in the form of food and fuel was distributed to 61,500 people⁵³.

Parallel with that, as the uprising left many children without parents, the missionaries from the Monastir station decided to add a new initiative to their activities, namely the organization of an orphanage. Taking into account the available vacant space in the dormitories, 10 girls were initially accommodated in the girls' school in the town and special donations were received for their support from the USA after an appeal on the part of the teachers to their personal friends⁵⁴ (At the same time 10 boys were sent to Salonica to be taken care of by the American missionaries there). In 1904, with the financial support of the British Bible Lands Mission Aid Society, a house located behind the building of the American Girls' School was rented and thus an orphanage was opened at the mission, which initially housed 20 girls and 14 boys aged 5 to 13⁵⁵. The British society donated funds in the amount of 2,200 dollars, which were used as early as in the following year to purchase and renovate a detached building, where the orphans were accommodated. Some of them, the more advanced and promising ones, attended the classes at the Girls' school, and the rest were instructed on-site by a graduate of the same school. The Americans were convinced that from a missionary point of view the orphanage would pay off more than its creation could cost, as it was expected that these children would have a beneficial impact on the people at their native places in the future. They hoped that in the near term the acceptance of the orphans would help awaken and cultivate an altruistic instinct among the students at the girls' school.

Until the Balkan Wars, the missionary work was still pursued along the usual strands, though not at such a fast pace as the missionaries would have liked. From the summer of 1904 onwards the Monastir station was already run by William P. Clarke, who arrived together with his wife to replace the Bonds, who had withdrawn. The new missionary family was passionate about the work but encountered a growing number of difficulties mostly stemming from the precarious situation in the country and the huge travel risks. Actually, starting as early as in the summer of

⁵³ Report of Monastir Station for the year ending April 6, 1904, *ЦДА, КМФ 19 ИИВ. № 550/14.*

⁵⁴ Report of the American School for Girls, Monastir, European Turkey, 1903-1904, *ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/14.*

⁵⁵ Annual Report of Monastir Station, April 17 1905, *ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/14.*

1903 the missionaries submitted to the American Board regular and very detailed reports on the situation in the Monastir vilayet, providing information about revolutionary actions, confrontations, various acts of violence, murders. This hindered severely the development of the missionary activities in the area of the Monastir station. In addition, the mission was still faced with financial difficulties. In the opinion of W. Clarke, the Monastir station received merely 55 percent of the usual funds for 1908, which precluded any expansion of the work⁵⁶.

However, attempts were made to increase the number of followers in Monastir. First, in the summer of 1906 Luka A. Mirchev was appointed pastor to help the mission station, and as he was born in the town, he had a good command of Bulgarian, Greek and Wallachian. This made it possible for a second preaching place to be opened several months later in the Yeni Mahala, which had to serve the Bulgarian Protestants, who refused to attend the services held in the Evangelical Church, as it was located in a "Grecoman quarter"⁵⁷. However, the second preaching place operated only until November 1907, when it was closed down due to irregular services caused by contagious diseases widespread in the town, as well as by the frequent absence of W. Clarke, who was busy preparing the launching of the new mission station in Kortcha⁵⁸.

In fact, the girls' school along with the orphanage persisted as the town's most stable evangelical institutions and representative sites of the American mission. Nevertheless, they also encountered problems. The major one for the girls' school was the drastic drop in the number of the day pupils, which was mostly due to the huge competition from other educational institutions in the town, at that located in close proximity to it⁵⁹. As for the orphanage, initially the hopes were that it would grow into a stand-alone boys' school⁶⁰. But a major problem for the missionaries was that they could not find a female American to take over the care for it. In 1907 Miss Martha Haskell did so for a year and according to the mission-

⁵⁶ W. P. Clarke to Sec. J. W. Barton, 26 October 1908, Monastir, ЦДАА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/15.

⁵⁷ Annual Report of the Monastir Station, 1906-1907, ЦДАА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/14.

⁵⁸ Report of Monastir Station for the year ending April 1908, ЦДАА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/14.

⁵⁹ Harriet Cole to Sec. J. W. Barton, 17 March 1909, Philippopolis, ЦДАА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/15.

⁶⁰ W. P. Clarke to Sec. J. W. Barton, 22 November 1905, Monastir, ЦДАА, КМФ 19, ИHB. № 550/15.

aries she did an excellent job, but subsequently she left for the United States⁶¹. In the summer of 1908, the orphanage was closed due to the spread of scarlet fever in the town and because of a difficult financial situation, while the children were sent to stay with relatives and friends. In fact, the missionaries were seriously considering the option of closing it down for good, but a donation from the British Bible Lands Mission Aid Society enabled them to pay out their debts and they decided to restore it⁶². The orphanage reopened in the autumn, but only with 7 girls, while all the boys were sent to Salonica⁶³. It was not until 1910 that the financial condition of the American Board became stable and with it that of the mission station in Monastir as well, but as it turned out, it was too late to achieve truly great boom of the missionary activities in the area.

The Balkan Wars brought considerable political changes to Monastir and significantly influenced the development of the Protestant missionary activities. In 1913 the town was already under Serbian administration. Initially the authorities were not hostile to the American mission and the girls' school continued to operate without interruption. It even increased its work considerably, since due to the fact that all other schools in the town had been closed as early as in November 1912 (except for that supported by the French mission), many new students were enrolled⁶⁴. Soon after that, however, a requirement was introduced to remove the Bulgarian language from the education process and to replace it with Serbian. However, in cases where teachers were unable to explain the points they wanted to make either in English or in Serbian, they were allowed to use the language that the authorities termed "Balkan"⁶⁵. The following year a Serbian teacher was assigned to the school at the expense of the government, who, according to the missionaries, was of almost no use, and they believed that he was simply spying for the authorities. Another problem for the Serbian authorities were the religious services at the Evangelical Church in Monastir conducted in Bulgarian language. For that reason W. Clarke had a special meeting with the "nachelnik" (chief) during which he tried to convince him that it was impossible to introduce Serbian in the services, because the mission had no trained people, but eventually agreed to

⁶¹ J. H. House, School Work at Monastir, *Missionary Herald*, 8, 1908, pp. 383-384.

⁶² W. P. Clarke to Sec. J. W. Barton, 13 July 1908, Monastir, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/15.

⁶³ Report of Monastir Station for the year ending March 1909, ЦДА, КМФ 19, ИИВ. № 550/14.

⁶⁴ D. Davis, Servian Rule at Monastir, *Missionary Herald*, 5, 1913, pp. 223-224.

⁶⁵ *Annual Report ABCFM*, 1914, pp. 68-69.

use a Serbian translation of the Bible rather than a Bulgaria one⁶⁶. But although these problems entailed an outflow of the regular attendants of the Sunday services, the girls' school was expanded considerably and at the same time its boys' department, as well as the established kindergarten gained in popularity. Thus, in 1915 the missionaries reported that the total number of the schoolchildren was 144, out of which 77 girls and 67 boys⁶⁷.

However, World War I brought about drastic changes. During the Bulgarian administration of Monastir between December 1915 and November 1916 the attitude of the authorities towards the missionaries was favourable⁶⁸. They performed their work without hindrance, to the extent allowed by the military restrictions. Traveling possibilities were highly limited and W. Clarke was not even allowed to make the trip to Sofia for his father's funeral⁶⁹. In fact, the core missionary activities from 1913 onwards were related, in addition to the work in the school, to the support of the numerous refugees, as well as to other charitable initiatives. Such were, for example, the donations of looms and other things necessary for knitting, sewing and lace making organized by Mrs. Clarke and provided in most cases to Turkish women⁷⁰. But after the occupation of the town by the Allied Powers William Clarke and his family, as well as Pastor Luka Mirchev were forced to leave it. In December 1916 they left for Salonica escorted by a Serbian military⁷¹. The Clarkes joined the work of the mission station there, while Pastor Mirchev was interned in France because of the Bulgarian language used during the religious services, which was not to the liking of the Serbian authorities⁷². Only the school principal Mary Matthews was allowed to remain at the mission station in Monastir. Even though she had the opportunity to leave, she did not do

⁶⁶ The Balkan Mission. From our stations in Serbia, *Missionary Herald*, 11, 1915, pp. 519-520.

⁶⁷ *Annual Report ABCFM* 1915, p. 97.

⁶⁸ April 6 Diary, Digital Exhibits of the Archives and Special Collections, <https://ascdc.mtholyoke.edu/items/show/3647> - 06.03.2020 r.

⁶⁹ Mary Matthews, Letter to Mrs. Haskell (Monastir, Bulgaria, July 19, 1916), Digital Exhibits of the Archives and Special Collections, <https://ascdc.mtholyoke.edu/items/show/3650> - 06.03.2020 r.

⁷⁰ Ö. Turan, American Protestant Missionaries and Monastir, 1912-17: Secondary Actors in the Construction of Balkan Nationalisms, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 4, 2000, pp. 131-133.

⁷¹ The Balkans. Established in Salonica, *Missionary Herald*, 4, 1917, pp. 188-189.

⁷² March 7, 1917 Diary, Digital Exhibits of the Archives and Special Collections, <https://ascdc.mtholyoke.edu/items/show/3649> - 06.03.2020 r.

so and despite the fact that on several occasions her life was seriously threatened by nearby shells, she remained there until the end of the war (she left the station in 1920). In the autumn of 1916 there were already just day pupils in the school, but in November of the same year, upon the arrival of the Allied Powers in Monastir, it was closed due to shortage of food and means for heating, as well as due to insufficient availability of female teachers. However, 17 girls stayed on at the orphanage and Miss Matthews took over the care for them together with another woman⁷³. Several Protestant families seeking refuge were also housed in the school premises. They all occupied mainly the ground floors and the basements, as the buildings were regularly shelled. In the course of the hostilities the buildings of the girls' school were bombed several times and sustained considerable damages. Eventually, homes were found for the orphans and the orphanage was also closed.

In 1917-1918, the Evangelical Church in Monastir was used only by a French Protestant pastor who conducted Sunday services for military men. Meanwhile the good relations between Miss Matthews and the French authorities enabled her to launch a rather unusual charity. In that period, given the lack of regular postal and telegraph services, it was quite difficult for local women whose husbands and sons were in the United States to receive the money sent by the latter. Due to the cooperation of the US Consul General in Salonica, these funds were received by him, and he respectively forwarded them to Miss Matthews, who handed them out to the women for whom they were intended after they signed receipts. This activity increased considerably and in 1918 she reported that she had on her list 238 families using her services⁷⁴. This made the American very popular among the local people and was reported as missionary success in the otherwise difficult military conditions. However, it also turned out to be the last contribution of a missionary of the American Board in Monastir.

After the end of the war, the former European Turkey Mission, whose stations were already located in 4 different countries, was renamed Balkan Mission. Soon after that, however, it was forced to rethink its activities, and it was decided that the work should be focused only on the territory of Bulgaria and in Salonica. The main reason for abandoning the operations in Monastir was the requirement that the language to be used should be Serbian, so the provision of missionaries and literature would cost the American Board a lot of effort and resources. Moreover, an important factor was that the Serbian authorities were reluctant to grant

⁷³ The Balkans. A Monastir Bulletin, *Missionary Herald*, 5, 1917, p. 237.

⁷⁴ The Balkans. Active Work in Monastir, *Missionary Herald*, 9, 1918, p. 412.

permission to missionary societies that operated in their neighbouring countries as well⁷⁵. Effective from January 1, 1922, all initiatives of the American Board on the territories of Serbia and Albania were transferred to the Methodist Episcopal Church operating there. The Bulgarian Protestant community in Vardar Macedonia shared the fate of their compatriots, as quite a large part of them left their native places forever⁷⁶. The Monastir station of the American Board ceased to exist, and in 1925, when the Methodists made an abortive attempt to maintain the girls' school, it was finally closed down and the buildings were sold⁷⁷.

The presence of the American Protestant missionaries in the Balkans in the 19th century did not entail a massive conversion of the local people, yet Protestant communities took shape at some places, even though they were not strong in numbers. The activities of the missionaries, however, also had a broader overall impact. Being bearers of a different culture, they undoubtedly contributed to the familiarization of the local people with the achievements of the modern world. On the one hand, they were related to the technological miracles and the progress presented in various forms to the underdeveloped inhabitants of the Balkans, and on the other hand they were associated with the innovative ideas about education, about entrepreneurship, about the role of women in society and the like. Undoubtedly these influences were also visible in Monastir, where American Board staff worked continuously in the period between 1873 and 1920 and did not go unnoticed at all. Their most significant achievements without any doubt were the long-term maintenance of a girls' boarding school, which, although not large, had its distinctive position among the other educational institutions in the town, as well as the establishment of an evangelical church. The termination of the missionary activities after the end of World War I was mainly due to their link to the Bulgarian people, which made them undesirable for the new rulers in Monastir. Yet, a lasting result of the long-standing American missionary presence in the town was the formation of a Protestant community, though a small one, which has existed to this day.

⁷⁵ *Annual Report ABCFM, 1920-1921*, pp. 62-63.

⁷⁶ Ж. Лефтеров, *Между България и Югославия. Методистката църква във Вардарска Македония, Македонски преглед*, 2, 2014, с. 69-88.

⁷⁷ P. B. Mojzes, *A History of the Congregational and Methodist Churches in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia*. PhD Thesis. Boston University Graduate School, 1965, p. 425.

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Elmira Vassileva

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
elmira.vassileva@balkanstudies.bg*

ZAGREB IN BULGARIAN LITERATURE DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Antoaneta Balcheva

Abstract: *The article is focused on the ideas of the Bulgarian intelligentsia about the Croatian capital at different stages of the political and spiritual history of Bulgarians and Croats. Zagreb, as an administrative and cultural capital, sets the pulse for the entire country, defining its structure. The city will be seen as a collective image of Croatian history and cultural identity, which acquires the qualities of a medium or a mental construct that connects different cultural strata and value hierarchies. Based on the analysis of literary works, travelogues, letters, travel notes, the dynamics of the town will be sought in the reflection of his many medieval and new histories, which intertwine numerous dialogical fields, legitimising him as the political, economic and cultural centre of the Croatian nation.*

Keywords: *Zagreb, Bulgarian Literature, Travelogues, Imagology*

The reflection of Zagreb, as a collective image of Croatian history and cultural identity, is a mental construct following the dialectic of the relationship between objective knowledge and self-knowledge – national, civic, social and personal in their development and changing proportion. It is the fruit of social trends, pathos, contemporary ideas, and of the changing individual psychological attitude of artists resulting from enriched social experience, the acquired knowledge and cultural sensitivity during the first half of the 20th century.

Already at the end of the 19th century, the interest of Bulgarian intellectuals in the Croatian lands was marked by the idea of national self-establishment and cultural emancipation of our spiritual elites, where a key role was played by Bishop Strossmayer and his policy of drawing Bulgarians towards the newly-established educational institutions in Zagreb: the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Art

(1867) and the Croatian University (1874). Georgi Zlatarski, Lyubomir Miletich, Georgi Bonchev, Spas Vatsov, Hristo Belchev, Benyo Tsonev and a number of other scholarship holders set off towards this educational and spiritual centre.

The educational programme initiated by the Đakovo benefactor was also an element of our intelligentsia's discussion on measuring against Europe in the framework of the Slavic spiritual realm. The Bishop's proposed project to reorganise part of the geopolitical space of Central and Southeast Europe, an attempt to legitimise Croatia, which had united Southern Slavs within the extended Habsburg Empire that had established its presence on the Balkans, would be at the basis of a long-term cultural development programme for South Slavic intellectuals, where Zagreb played the role of *locus amoenus* in their aspirations towards spiritual cohesion. The Croatian capital became the scene for intensive meetings of the Bulgarian and Croatian elites, whose cultural contacts were "institutionalised" through the creation of professional communities and associations such as the Lada Union of South Slavic Artists, which gave impetus to the emergence of similar unions in other branches – of the falcons (sports activity clubs), doctors, teachers and even beekeepers. The May 1905 visit of Bulgarian artists, writers (literary scholars), journalists, students at the invitation of the sculptor Robert Frangeš-Mihanović and the novelist Šandor Gjalski Babić, which coincided with the jubilee exhibition of the Croatian art association, researched by Professor M. Georgieva¹, became an important source of their first impressions of the Croatian capital. The travel notes of Stefan Bobchev "*Mayski dni v Zagreb*" ("*May Days in Zagreb*")²; of Alexander Bozhinov "*V Zagreb*" ("*In Zagreb*")³, and of Andrey Protich "*Zagrebski dni*" ("*Zagreb Days*")⁴; were published in *Balgarska Sbirka* Magazine, *Den* Newspaper, *Pryaporets* Newspaper. These texts were still strongly connected with the cognitive-descriptive, documentary-informative travelogue model. The travel genre was still undifferentiated from the journalistic article, from the natural science, geographical-ethnographic essay, from the memoir. At the same time, they set forth a new perception of otherness, a new comparison of "ours" to "foreign", transforming them into an identification resource, an in-

¹ М. Георгиева, *Южнославянски диалози на модернизма*. София, Български художник, 2003.

² Ст. Бобчев, „Майски дни в Загреб“, сп. *Българска сбирка*, год. XII, 1 юни 1905.

³ А. Божинов, *В Загреб*. Бележки от Александър Божинов, в. *Ден*, 2 май 1905, бр. 485, с. 1.

⁴ А. Протич, *Загребски дни* I, в. *Пръпорец*, 28 април 1905, бр. 140 и 143; *Загребски дни* II, в. *Пръпорец*, 30 април 1905, бр. 142 и 143.

strument for national self-knowledge. The emotionally uplifted journalistic pathos served the narrative of Slavic utopia, which envisaged unification of the southern Slavs in the cultural field. At the same time, this main emphasis was permanently accompanied by the evaluative, axiological view of the travel writer, for whom the individually seen was “interpreted within the collectively experienced identity of regionally validated cultural norms”⁵.

The reader was introduced in parallel to a wider European civilization context, with which the Bulgarian elites aimed to self-identify. The story of the developing imaginary community of Slavs passed through the filter of the actual narrative on the mentality, social attitudes, accomplishments of the Croats in the area of education, arts and culture. “Zagreb looks quite European”, writes Al. Bozhinov. “It is as if this makes you think that also its people ... will be a bit more European than most of us. And, it is indeed so. In any respect you will see that the ray of the Western light passed through them earlier and for now it seems to me that it is warmer and brighter than the Eastern one”⁶. The project of modernity, often identified with the concept of Europe, is a supporting structure in the architecture of the modern national identity for our native intelligentsia. “Now the city itself, even based on a general impression gained from the railway, is perfectly modern; even only on this basis one can make a judgment of the actual culture possessed by Croats”⁷, Andrey Protich observed. Croatian cultural institutions, the function of which triggered an interest and which were a role model, held a particular place in the eye of the Bulgarian intellectual. The Croatian University, the Academy, theatre, the Strossmayer Gallery, the Industrial School (the Royal School of Local Crafts), described very evocatively in Stefan Bobchev’s “May Days in Zagreb”, together with an account of the warm welcome and the joint “programme meetings and activities” between the artists and the literary scholars is the central axis of the general composition. The narrative follows the trajectory of the path, but we also observe a distancing from its strict factuality in the depiction of nature, which has a new emotional and pictorial status as a projection of personal attitude, emotion, a mood. The May spring days symbolise the revival of Slavic unity and are a harbinger of the sprouted and anticipated fruitful future contacts.

With his more frequent individual creative interferences that fictionalise the travelogue, Alexander Bozhinov somewhat wanders away from the documental

⁵ В. Стефанов, *Участта Вавилон. Лица, маски, двойници в българската литература*. София, Анупис, 2000, с. 151.

⁶ Божинов, *Загреб*, с. 1.

⁷ Протич, *Загребски дни*, с. 1.

and factual presentation. Together with the national, civic point of view, his notes also show a subjective artistic awareness that goes beyond the facts and goes in the direction of their willful associative structuring and a quest for conceptual and emotional suggestions. The author does not hesitate to give his critical assessment of the described artistic artefacts, such as the architectural decoration of the new art pavilion, built by Fellner & Helmer, to make a comparison with the theatre built by them in Zagreb and the similarly constructed building in Sofia; to share his professional assessment of the works of Croatian modernism; the sculptures of Rudolf Valdec and Robert Frangeš or the landscapes of Emanuel Vidović, from which he cannot take his eyes off because they “create a heavy mood and dig into the human soul”. “The figure of the author speaks of his work. A landscape without an emotion or just a painting, on which the artist has not sprinkled at least a drop of his soul, irrespective of the soul, would have as much value as an Order for civil merit has for a Senegalese”⁸. True to this maxim, he adds colour and vividness to his text, sketching in a verbal cartoon the figures of his companions, especially Svetozar with his romantic adventures or illustrating “the intimate gatherings of all Croatian writers and artists”⁹, whose caricatures hang on the walls of the Croatian literary association.

The author of “Zagreb Days”, Andrey Protich, also aimed for a complete and synthesised presentation of Croatian culture. In the first part of his works, he committed to recreating the main stages of constructing the project for South Slavic unification through the planned association of South Slavic writers and publicists and the meeting with the members of the Lada Union. However, already at the end of this article, he immediately expresses a more serious interest, beyond the personal or work meetings of South Slavic intellectuals: “we were guests of all of Zagreb, of Croatia in general... we were thrown under the influence of Croatian culture to the extent, of course, that it is centralised in Zagreb”¹⁰. The young art and theatre critic had the ambition to present an up-to-date analysis of the urban stylistic solutions in the Croatian capital, related to European cultural history. The urban architectural space of the streets and squares were compared with the ancient Greek, Roman and medieval squares, a comparison was sought between the appearance of the new and old city and their role in shaping its various images. In order for the reader to acquire the feeling of a modern era, the author, almost in the style of Baudelaire, contrasted the sacred with the profane, achieving a more

⁸ Божинов, *Загреб*, с. 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Протич, *Загребски дни*, с. 2.

blurred space, a fluidity, putting in one place the life fragments of the present filled with everyday emotions together with the signs of the past and of memory that were charged with uniqueness or a particular aura. Mirogoj Cemetery was presented simultaneously as a sacral place that holds the ashes of renowned fellow citizens and as the “most suitable *rendezvous* venue for lovers”. “However, despite of the thoughts of extinguished life, eternity or rather the vanity of human life, triggered by cemeteries, maybe that is why the Zagreb cemetery is intended for a person’s lonesome walks or as the most suitable place for lovers’ *rendezvous*, which indeed were not lacking amongst the secluded little spots”¹¹.

The information-cognitive, enlightening effect sought in the listed works reflects the emphasised pragmatic tendency, which is preserved as a tradition in the following texts, reflecting the interest of the Bulgarian intellectual in the Croatian lands. Their utilitarian orientation corresponds to the characteristic of the time cultural and educational policies, designed as a result of the political, social changes in the historical annals of the two nations. After the First World War, mutual exchange in the field of science and culture functioned more and more in the form of personal contacts, as from 1918 until 1941, the “links between Croats and Bulgarians naturally transformed into Bulgarian – Yugoslav links”¹², i.e. they were no longer bilateral, after Croatia’s entry initially into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSCS) and later in 1929, when it became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. On the one hand, the iconic construction of the idea of South Slavic unification was preserved, nourished by the policy of the Great Powers and gaining a new political dimension and contents after the Bulgarian – Yugoslavian pact for “eternal friendship”, signed in 1937 between the Prime Ministers – Georgi Kyoseivanov and Milan Stoyadinović, while on the other, the emergence of the autonomous Croatian Banovina (in Croatian: Banovina Hrvatska), which lasted from August 26, 1939 until April 10, 1941, when the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia was declared, reflected on the strive for more detailed acquaintance of the Bulgarian public with the history and cultural landmarks of these lands.

The travel notes and impressions “От Черно море до Триглав” (“From the Black Sea to Triglav”) by Lyubomir Mihaylov, published in 1939, in which a special chapter was devoted to Zagreb, were also the fruit of this increased interest.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, с. 1.

¹² Р. Божилова, Българи и хървати през столетията. Опит за обобщение, В: *Българи и хървати през вековете. Андрия Качич Миошич и българите*. София, ИК „Гутенберг“, 2000, с. 15.

The cultural centre of the Croats was presented as a “treasure trove of the spirit”. The image of the city through the eyes of the aesthete and the streets, boulevards, buildings and architectural monuments he walked through were “all woven of beauty and harmony”. Contemporary cultural institutions held a central place in his mental map: museums, galleries, theatres, and the religious temples that shaped its spiritual biography. The main emphasis was on the Zagreb Theatre (*Kazalište*) that crowns the pursuit of cultural emancipation and the establishment of the ethnic vitality of Croats. The temple theatre was examined as a retort that transforms the amalgamation of the people into the precious metal of the nation. “Of course, this building is also the centre of their spiritual culture. It is like a tribune for all those ideas that excited Croats throughout the centuries”. Its exterior architecture and interior design aroused the admiration of Bulgarians and was an occasion to express their pride in their stay in the capital. The notion of the majesty and dignity of the city was reinforced by the description of the Zagreb Cathedral, which “with its monumentality it expressed the strive for the heights of heaven and causes humility in the souls of the worshipers”. He also expressed great enthusiasm for the small church near Jelačić square – Crkva Trpećega Isusa, with its glass altar designed by the artist Marijan Trepše.

L. Mihaylov’s Zagreb was not just a topic, motif or décor, but a “medium shell”, involving people, ages, ideas, in a constant procedure of presentation and comparison. In its spiritual topography there was also the medieval and modern history of the Croats, in which different dialogic fields were intertwined, shaping their modern mentality. “Maybe their contact with the Austrians left a print on their character, because Croats prefer to observe, to contemplate and to act in favour of the community, the environment they live in and to move”¹³. In this panopticon, special attention was also devoted to the memory of the persons who left their mark in the previous decades – Pavle and Stepan Radić and the worshipped Vladko Maček.

The foreigner tried to decipher the cultural codes of the past also through the lens of the modern age. He was both impressed by the piety of the Croats to the Almighty, their respect for religious customs and traditions, but at the same time bored and disappointed by the vanity of everyday life and the “calculating” – modern mind in the words of Georg Simmel¹⁴, which had found its place there as

¹³ Л. Михайлов, *От Черно море до Триглав*. София, изд. Д. Чилингиоров, 1946, с. 283.

¹⁴ Г. Зимел, *Фрагментарният характер на живота*. София, *Критика и хуманизъм*, 2014, с. 32.

well. “The restaurants and diners are full, like in our country. While their cathedral is empty. It fills up only on special occasions, when representatives of God, overdressed in fancy clothes perform liturgy and pray for His blessing”. “The cathedrals have become monuments for some religiousness, but not for our time. It is so turbulent and dynamic”¹⁵. In the eyes of the traveller, Zagreb has become a modern cultural reality, where the contradictions between “old” and “new” can be seen only through art.

The enhanced personal beginning and the related role of the imagination, fictional conventionality, characteristic of the Bulgarian travelogue between the two world wars gave multiple layers to the presentation. Lyubomir Mihaylov’s journey to Zagreb was not only a geographical mapping of the places he visited, but above all a journey through modernism and the rich cultural sensitivity this presupposes.

Namely these aesthetic criteria were also at the foundation of the travelogue issued four years later “Harvatsko i Zagreb” (“Croatia and Zagreb”) by Stiliyan Chilingirov¹⁶, which was a kind of pinnacle of his literary work. From the viewpoint of analytical psychology, which was modern at that time, the author synthesised the traditional and the contemporary, in order to shape his vision of Croatia and its capital. The text, printed in four consecutive editions of *Dnes* Newspaper and being the fruit of the numerous visits of the Chair of the Union of Bulgarian Writers to the Independent State of Croatia, recreated the vivid kaleidoscopic nature of the Croatian capital, involving the reader in a constant process of storytelling, focused on one main goal – to build an up-to-date image of Croatia.

Sharing his own cultural experience, Stiliyan Chilingirov drew the “official” places in the city that build its identity. The gaze roams through the urban space played with images, carriers of different cultural potential, managing to map the busiest landmarks of the capital during the 30ies and 40ies of the 20th century – Jelačić square, the Archaeological, Ethnographic, Historical, City Museums, the Old and the Modern Gallery, the University and Bishop’s library, the Ministry of Education, the altar of the Virgin Mary in the Upper Town, Maximir Park, Zagreb cemetery, the trade houses and cafes.

Among the diversity and variety of this panopticon, the square around the statue of Ban Jelačić, associated with the signature of a significant stage in the development of Zagreb as a centre of commerce, is described in a particularly vivid

¹⁵ Михайлов, *От Черно море до Триглав*, с. 285.

¹⁶ Ст. Чилингиров, „Хърватско и Загреб“, в. *Днес*, 1943, бр. 986.

manner. In this mental map, Dubrovnik Hotel holds a central place, as an intermediary and a crossroads between East and West. The stage of the square symbolises the dynamics of contemporary urban space and is part of its modern profile.

The main characteristics of Zagreb as a cultural centre have a structurally defining meaning in the meta-text formulated by Stiliyan Chilingirov. Its symbolic picture is also layered with associations with the European capitals of the spirit, against which Croats measure themselves. “It is enough to walk around for a few hours to see how much was invested here in the cultural progress of the city and the country. Croats, as they themselves admit, wanted to make out of their capital what Paris is for France, Rome for Italy and Athens for Ancient Greece”¹⁷.

The cultural framework of the values includes monuments, museums, galleries, libraries, containing “envious” “old treasures”, “expensive collections of manuscripts, old books”. Over the years, they have all acquired the character of cultural institutions, while the administrative institutions, such as the Ministry of Education – the appearance of Palaces of Art, museums and picture galleries. Thanks to them, Zagreb has generated universal values and socio-cultural practices that are a kind of bridge, a place for meeting, dialogue, aiming to construct an identity that assumes all of the characteristics of the Modern Time. The museums and the beautifully painted “by the brush of the most famous Croatian artists” interiors of the institutions become the home of the historical meta-narrative. The visitor has the opportunity to communicate directly with history or through a curious interlocutor to penetrate into the spiritual biography of the country. The complex compositions, “most of them with plots from Croatian history, are a source of pride for every Croat, and he is quick to draw your attention to them, to interpret them for you and to emphasise their historical and artistic value”¹⁸.

Over the years, Zagreb has become an elusive stage for the theatre of everyday relations and the spaces of the sacred and the profane, its various visual representations that have shaped its cultural semantics over the centuries. In the Upper Town, on the altar of the Virgin Mary, “where you will always see some woman praying, makes you cross yourself as well and pass by. And the entire involuntarily area turns into a temple, in which you are a humble worshiper”¹⁹. Other heterotopic realms have a similar value, for example the parks and cemeteries, changing in time, combining different, otherwise incompatible spaces; leading to a break with traditional time, provoking states of self-reflection of the individual. In his

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

description of the parks “for the living and for the dead”, with special respect the author speaks of the Zagreb cemetery as a place where one can draw from life and historical experience. The attitude of the living to this symbolic space is an act of self-respect, of fitting into the traditions and values of a pan-European humanistic culture. “And maybe the cult for the dead is one of the strongest traits of culture. He who is unable to show appropriate respect for his predecessors, he knows no self-respect. And self-respect is one of the characteristic traits of the real person”²⁰. For Stiliyan Chilingirov, the cemetery park is a museum, where the exhibits should be seen not only as artwork, but also as symbols revealing the past of the Croatian people. “And the Zagreb cemetery is the history not only of the city, but of all of Croatia. You read the inscriptions on the monuments and no matter how little you know about the past of this people, you can guess many facts and events from his story”²¹. Laid in the unified plane of the past, this silent city is sounded by countless voices and destinies that seem to introduce us to the lives of the living. The Croatian elites involved in this transfer of ideas and creative achievements between the generations have firmly “tied the knot between yesterday and today to lay it as the cornerstone of their tomorrow”²². The foundations of Croatian cultural identity will be based on their work, which has set the features of a modern urban aesthetic. Drawing the comprehensive matrix of the city, where the metropolises of human consciousness meet, Stiliyan Chilingirov makes continuous associations with places parallel to Zagreb and Croatia and people from the memory of Bulgarian reality. Jelačić square reminds his of Slaveykov Square, the Ruma ridge of Ograzhden Mountain, Slime is the Bulgarian Chamkoria etc.

Our intellectuals’ journey to the Croatian capital in the first half of the 20th century, the contact with “otherness”, which was the fruit of a planned meeting with what was seen and the unknown, formulated a number of the problems of our own national development, the horizons of our own social, personal self-awareness, provoked the dynamic self-reflection of the Ego. The message transmitted to the reader is the result of the richer social experience, the knowledge gained and the cultural sensitivity of the Bulgarian travelling through the Croatian lands.

In the multifaceted variations of the urban scene, an innumerable number of contemporaries are superimposed, interpreting differently the cultural and historical identity of the Croats through the prism of the individual senses.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

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Antoaneta Balcheva

*Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
45 Moskovska st., 1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
ani.balcheva@balkanstudies.bg*

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