



But Then There Were also Such Bulgarians: A Bibliography for the Teacher, Enlightener and Statesman Nestor Markov

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Abstract

This is a review article on the book [1]. The original text is published in Bulgarian in [2].

Recently the profound bibliographical study of Prof. Maria Mladenova about the Revival teacher, enlightener, scholar and Community Center(1) activist, the post-liberation statesman, author of student textbooks and dictionaries Nestor Markov, was published [1]. For the first time in this book bibliographic data about 319 publications by Nestor Markov were collected and presented with great completeness, as well as many written materials about him - by his contemporaries and so to the present day. The bibliography was created thanks to the project of the Regional Museum of History and Community Center "Saglasie(2) 1869" in Pleven, entitiled "Nestor Markov and the Pleven enlighteners", financed by the municipality of Pleven.

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Agreeing to become a science editor of the bio-bibliography of Nestor Markov captivated by Prof. Maria Mladenova's narrative about his interesting life full of twists, and his solid literary work, I had only a vague idea of what lies ahead of us. The more difficult and complicated was the search for the materials and the bibliographic riddles that we had to solve, the more my admiration grew of what vivid personalities Bulgaria had, the devotion, the innovative ideas and the emotional charge they had, working for the progress of their country, how with enviable perseverance, they managed to complete their work. Prof. Mladenova went deeper and deeper into her search, in order to bring out forgotten or little-known publications. With the precision of a detective, she found facts, compared data, was excited by her findings, met with relatives, sought out adherents, who have explored the protean work of Nestor Markov, waded piece by piece his bibliographic portrait.

So from the idea of presenting to today's reader and researcher the bibliography of a Pleven teacher, enlightener and reformer, founder of Community Center "Saglasie" in Pleven, a leading conceptual inspirator for the theatrical life in the city, the birth was given to the bibliographic image of an exceptional person with contributions far beyond the regional level. And although the intention to create a bibliography for Nestor Markov, following his life paths, could also have begun in Harmanli, Haskovo, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Rousse, Varna, Sofia, however, it took place in Pleven. But I am convinced that this bibliographic work has a nation-wide dimensions, because the personality of Nestor Markov cannot be placed within any geographical boundaries, it can only relate to Bulgaria itself.

Who is Nestor Markov, according to the extensive starting chapter, which is an excellent introductory element in the presented bibliography? With full right Prof. Maria Mladenova calls N. Markov one of the titans of the Bulgarian Revival(3). In the study he was compellingly represented as a very active politician, statesman and teacher, who worked in various positions in the Revival and post-liberation Bulgaria. His personality is outlined against the background of memorial events for our country, based on many facts that are drawn from the

bibliographic sources.

In order to understand and appreciate the complexity of the present bibliographic search, we must point out some of the accents of N. Markov's impressive biography. Nestor Markov was born in 1836 in the small village of Erobas (today's Krivo pole), Haskovo district. He studied in his native village, briefly also in the village of Kurucheshme, and then in Haskovo. He graduated from the classical school "Kiril and Metodiy" in Plovdiv headed by the famous pedagogue Yoakim Gruev. He also attended the Turkish High School in the city, absorbed knowledge at the American Protestant School in Plovdiv, he studied French also in Tzarigrad(4) in a Catholic boarding school. His systematic and persistent self-education, however, is at the core of what makes him a brilliant teacher. Markov briefly taught (worked as a teacher) in Harmanli, in Haskovo, where he brought upon himself the disapproval of grecophiles(5), because of his patriotic and revolutionary ideas, he was libeled, falsely accused and tried, but he was acquitted. Then the Pleven period comes in his life, which is a beneficial for him, as a teacher, enlightener and reformer in education. In Pleven, Markov also prepares two of his textbooks, establishes the "Saglasie" community center, launches the beginning of the theatrical activity in the city with the play "Life and Death of Saint Genoveva", stages the plays "The Phoney Civilization" and "The army marches of Bonaparte", which were forbidden. He also teaches in Rousse, where he actively participates as well in the cultural and educational activities, works hard to create new textbooks. He was over again in Pleven in 1872, then at Gabrovo High School, where he was accused of revolutionary activity, was arrested with other teachers and sentenced to death, but later he received amnesty. He teaches also at the first Bulgarian theological school in the monastery "St. St. Peter and Paul", invited by the Patriarchy of Tarnovo.

During the Revival period, N. Markov stands out in his time as a teacher with modern ideas, also as a writer, a public figure, a community center and a theater activist. He participated in the Russian-Turkish Liberation War as a translator assigned to General Gurko's headquarters. His disagreement with the Berlin Treaty and his par-

ticipation in the Unity Committees (1878-1879) in southern Bulgaria put him at the heart of the crucial events for the unification of the country. In the Temporary Russian Administration (1878-1879) he serves as a secretary of the district chief of Haskovo. Then he becomes a district governor of Stara Zagora (1879-1881), where he works devotedly for the rise of the city from the ashes, in which the city was turned by the Turkish troops. And there his tenacious and 24-hour per day work "is appreciated" - with an unfair dismissal - he leaves the city. He was consecutively governor of Tarnovo (1882-1884), Rousse (1884-1886), Varna (1901) and Plovdiv (1901), his main mission being to impose justice and lawfulness, to reconcile sharp party passions, to be objective and impartial. For his activity in favor of the Fatherland he was awarded several times with high Russian orders by the Emperors Alexander III and Nikolay II, for which later he incurred upon himself the anger of the Bulgarian Tsar Ferdinand. In 1883 he briefly served as a Minister of the Interior in the government of Leonid Sobolev, he was twice elected as a Member of the National Assembly. In periods in which he did not hold high state positions, he taught at the First Sofia Male High School (1887-1893) and in the Rousse Men's High School (1894-1896). After retiring after 40 years of state and political activity, Nestor Markov devoted himself entirely to his literary activities.

I mention all these facts from his biography because they, in one way or another, have been reflected by the described publications in the bibliography presented. Details of his various activities can be found, after careful study, in the periodical press during the Revival, as well as in many periodicals published in the different regions of the post-liberation Bulgaria where he lived and worked. Unfortunately, part of these periodicals is hard to find today in our libraries, because they are not complete or preserved in their fullness, making the bibliographic search very difficult. Also challenging is to study the memories of his contemporaries, reflected in various collections, the examination of which also requires bibliographic flair, meticulousness and patience. To the search of such sources Prof. Mladenova pays special attention. A hardship for the bibliographer is also the long chronological period

of the study - from 1869 to 2016, which requires both the examination of a huge amount of sources and the knowledge of the peculiarities and specifics of the Bulgarian book publishing and of the periodic printing during the Revival, (1878-1944), Socialist (1944-1989) and Democratic (1989-2016) Bulgaria.

Like any personal bibliography also that of Nestor Markov has two large sections that reflect his own work and the things written about him. The contribution of the bibliography is first of all in the fullness of the collected and described literary heritage of Nestor Markov himself. The descriptions of 47 of his texts are included, among which are his first books: "Small arithmetic", in two editions - from 1869, and 1872; "Assembly of Arithmetic Problems", 1869; "Geometry, Rectilinear Trigonometry and Statics", 1871; "Grammar of the Turkish Language" in two parts, 1871-1874; "French Glossary", 1874; "Lexicological Grammar for Studying French Language and Style", 1875. Many times outlasting their time are the seven dictionaries he assembled - French-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-French, full and pocket size. Through the bibliography Prof. Maria Mladenova draws attention to a fact unknown to the research on Nestor Markov that his dictionaries were published also much later, a long time after his death, in Germany (1929, 1940 after additional work on them by Alexander Doric), by giving for the first time their complete descriptions retrieved from the electronic catalog WorldCat as they are absent from the Bulgarian libraries. It was also found that all his dictionaries are present in the electronic catalogs, hence also in the funds of a number of foreign national libraries, e.g., in French, Dutch, Swiss libraries, which is an enormous recognition for a Bulgarian lexicographer from that period. Very diverse are the presented publications of Nestor Markov, which appeared in collections and periodicals. Here we have to pay attention to several published letters to Petko Voyvoda and Tsani Ginchev, in which he shares interesting life and work problems. We should also highlight his early writings in the Revival newspapers - the "Turkey", "Macedonia", "Law", "Century"; the Ruschuk "Danube"; the Bucharest "Fatherland" and "School", on the issues of the school and the community Revival center, the struggles for an independent

church, literary notices and others. Then follow his memories of his birthplace, his educational activities, reports and expositions, he made as a regional governor, remarks on teaching activity, established by him statutes and instructions. Described are also published memories of his place of birth, his educational activities, as well as notes on the teaching curricula.

The majority of the bibliographic material found and documented in the bibliography is the one written for Nestor Markov. Among them, I find very valuable memories and notes about him by Stoyan Zaimov, Yoakim Gruev, Anastasia Tosheva, Nikola Obretenov, Konstantin Irechek, Toma Vasilyov, Hristo Stambolski, Atanas Iliev and others, as they allow to outline his portrait more clearly, they inscribe him in the most authentic way in the time he lives, and note his communication with remarkable personalities. Prof. Mladenova dedicates a lot of effort to the detailed disclosure of materials related to the activities of Nestor Markov as a prefect in the different settlements. Not only the publications of several researchers of Nestor Markov's heritage, such as Nedyalko Dimov, Tianko Vulchinov, Snezhana Marinova, Viko Mitkov, etc., are included but also the numerous publications in the periodical press, official documents like the type of statistical reports, decrees, anniversary books. A significant part of the bibliography is represented by the newer material for Nestor Markov, which highlights more in-depth research into individual aspects of his life, work, and literary contributions. Numerous materials from scientific conferences and other festivals dedicated to Nestor Markov, organized in Haskovo, Pleven, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Stara Zagora, as well as publications in scientific and documentary collections and individual monographs, are also collected and described. They suggest a resurgence of the interest in personalities from our Revival and post-liberation past which, with their work and the literary legacy they left to us, can serve as an example to today's generation, both with their high level of education and intelligence, with their efforts to serve higher national causes, with their devotion to the Fatherland, with their endeavors to put spiritual aspirations higher than their personal rise.

As we have already mentioned, the bibliographic search required

not only high bibliographic professionalism and research flair, but also a broad general culture, deep historical and local life and culture knowledge, the ability to work with old periodicals, to recognize the public and literary circles that are behind them, to search for and find the links between the publications, to reveal the initials of the "hidden" authors. With all these challenges, Prof. Maria Mladenova has done the best. The structure of the bibliography follows the traditions of this genre. The explored publications, chronologically ranging from 1869 to 2016, are grouped into two main titles: "Publications by Nestor Markov" (subdivided into "Textbooks - Original and Translated", "Dictionaries", "Publications in Collections and Periodicals ") and "Publications for Nestor Markov " .

The basic principle of arranging the explored texts is chronologically alphabetical. The bibliographic records in each title are ordered according to the year of their printing, and when a few records occur within a year, they are sorted inside alphabetically. An important feature of the bibliography is that many of the papers presented in it are annotated, often with quotations from the documents themselves to emphasize the authenticity of the assessments of Nestor Markov's work or to reveal the color of the language of the respective authors.

In order to create a fast and reliable information search, two pointers are created in the directory: by name and geographically. The index finger enables us to trace the circles of people with whom Nestor Markov had communicated who have left memories about him or who have written and published texts about him after his death to our days. The geographic index leads us to places related to his professional path, showing us in which villages his literary interests and his activities as a statesman have concentrated. A special emphasis in the bibliography is given in the form of chronicle of more important dates from the life and work of Nestor Markov, as well as to the Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ganka Kamishevas article about the contribution of Nestor Markov for teaching physics in the 19th century. Undoubtedly, however, from all the texts, the most important thing from a factual point of view is the mentioned study by Prof. Mladenova, who besides drawing his detailed portrait and making continuous references to the

bibliographic information, throws a bridge to the future - with the fascinating narrative about the family and the home of Nestor Markov, for his descendants, among whom were respected doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, outstanding mathematicians and polyglots, who apparently inherited the talents, working capacity and intelligence of their famous predecessor. As a thorough and pedantic scholar, Prof. Maria Mladenova knows that no bibliography can achieve absolute completeness of the documents, so she draws in her explanatory notes the possible accents of future research referring to Nestor Markov. According to her, they should concentrate on studying the archives of the National Assembly in order to follow in more detail the activities of N. Markov as a Member of the National Assembly; a deeper search for a greater number of titles from periodicals, both central and local, to find supposed material about him published in the days immediately after his death, because he was a known and respected personality in his time, and the presence of such communications and more extensive material is fully justified. Supposedly, a specialized study of the state archives in the cities, where Nestor Markov was a teacher or district governor, would provide also additional information to enrich his biography. I would also add that identifying and reflecting electronic resources related to Nestor Markov is also a possible approach to future searches, although such resources have a perishable presence on the Internet. The availability of digital copies of the textbooks and dictionaries of Nestor Markov in authoritative information systems such as the National Academic Library System (NABIS) Catalog and the electronic catalogs of other Bulgarian libraries also deserve more extensive research and popularization.

Any suggestions made for future research on the spiritual heritage of Nestor Markov and his documents do not diminish the significance of his bibliography presented here. It is undoubtedly extensive in its chronological and geographic scope work, which provides an excellent basis not only for future, even more serious research, but also for popularizing among the wider audience the literary contributions and multifaceted activity of an interesting person with Revival ideals and post-liberation enthusiasm, working honestly for the uplifting of his

Fatherland.

That is why in my conclusion I would like to return to the title of this text - "But Then There Were also Such Bulgarians". The biobibliography for Nestor Markov convinces us in this, giving us the opportunity to choose which one of the sources we want to touch ourselves.

References

- [1] Maria Mladenova, Nestor Markov 1836-1916. Biobibliography, Pleven, 2016 (in Bulgarian).
- [2] Tsvetanka Pancheva, But then there were also such Bulgarians: A Bibliography for the Teacher, Enlightener and Statesman Nestor Markov. In: Blagoeva, D. (Ed.), Nestor Markov and his contribution to the lexicography and education, Proceedings of the Jubilee Science Session dedicated to the 180th anniversary of the birth of Nestor Markov, Sofia, 2016 (in Bulgarian).

Notes

- (1) Community Centre - chitalishte (in Bulgarian) is a library, educational and cultural center, which played very important role in the Revival Bulgaria.
- (2) Accord
- (3) The Bulgarian Revival is a time period around the time of liberation from the Ottoman rule; Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878). More precisely, toward the end of the 18th and during the 19th centuries the Bulgarian lands started seeing an upsurge of economic activity and national integration. This marked the reawakening of the Bulgarian people and an urge to establish a national state period known as The Bulgarian Revival.
- (4) Tzarigrad – Today's Istanbul, Turkey.
- (5) Grecophiles (gyrkomans in Bulgarian) were followers of the Greek way of life, they hindered the national awareness of the Bulgarian population.