



Moral messages in a new book about the eminent enlightener Nestor Markov¹

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Before sharing my impressions of the valuable book by Maria Lovdzhieva [1], I would like to recall who Nestor Markov was, because I believe that his name is unknown to young audiences and even to many intellectuals. He is partially forgotten, although he is one of the key figures of the Bulgarian National Revival⁽¹⁾.

Nestor Markov occupies a merited place among eminent Bulgarians. He was a teacher and reformer, author of manuals and noted lexicographer, whose work was recognized by the award of the Order of Merit by the French Republic for contributions to French culture. Generations of francophones have learned the language with the help of his Bulgarian-French and French-Bulgarian dictionaries.

He was a distinguished public figure and statesman, cultural and theater worker, fighter against Grecophiles⁽²⁾ in the Haskovo region. For his patriotic activities he was arrested and even sentenced to death.

¹This text was published in Bulgarian as an introduction to the book [1].

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During the Russian-Turkish war he was a translator in the headquarters of General Yosif Gurko and he marched alongside his troops from Pleven to San Stefano.

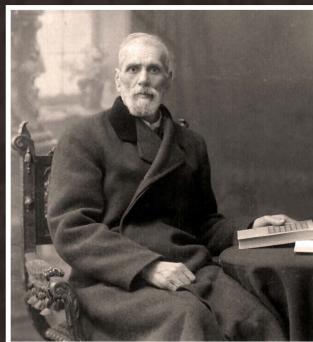
In 1878-1879 he was President of the Haskovo committee Unity and a supporter of the captain Petko Voivoda detachment.

After the Liberation Nestor Markov was consecutively appointed a regional governor of the cities of Haskovo, Stara Zagora, Tarnovo, Ruse, Varna and Plovdiv. He was nominated by the general-governor of Eastern Rumelia, Alexandar Bogoridi, as the governor of the region of Stara Zagora, comprising five districts. His main task was to restore the city of Stara Zagora, burned by the Turks, which he accomplished excellently.

In 1883 he was a deputy of General Leonid Sobolev as an acting head of the Ministry of internal affairs. For his perfect work as a statesman he was decorated six times by Russian Imperial orders.

All people knowing Nestor Markov considered him to be an extremely decent, modest and worthy man. On the occasion of his 180th anniversary the Institute for Bulgarian language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences organized a scientific session, dedicated to the versatile activities of Nestor Markov. The presented reports have been published in a jubilee collection edited by Prof. Diana Blagoeva [2]. Some of the communications in the book are dedicated to his activity as an enlightener, statesman, public figure and teacher. He has merited the highest appreciation of his colleagues and alumni

ЩРИХИ ОТ ДВЕ ЕПОХИ



Нестор Марков
ПИСМА И СПОМЕНИ

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including Dimitar Blagoev, Georgi Kirkov, Aleko Konstantinov, Stanimir Stanimirov, Nikola Nachov, Nikola Mihov, Petar Peshev, Toma Popvasilyov and many other scholars, politicians and devoted builders of modern Bulgaria, most of whom became members of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Other papers are focused on his prominent activity as a lexicographer and author of the first French-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-French dictionaries. With their many re-editions his dictionaries occupy a notable place in the history of the Bulgarian language heritage and are regarded as editions which supported our communion with the French civilization (according to Vesa Kyuvlieva, 1996).

On the occasion of his noteworthy anniversary the Regional museum in Haskovo has published a special jubilee newspaper, dedicated to its eminent fellow-citizen, Nestor Markov, with articles devoted to his life and work. In 2017 the Regional council of Haskovo recognized Nestor Markov as a Bulgarian of the greatest merit, and awarded him the honorary title of Freeman of Haskovo.

The Bulgarian National library St.St. Cyril and Methodius, along with six leading scientific and cultural institutions, has organized an impressive jubilee exhibition presenting the life of the patriot Nestor Markov in service to Bulgaria. Due to the great interest of many regional libraries it became a travelling exposition which, in 2017-18, was displayed in Haskovo, Stara Zagora, Gabrovo, Harmanli, Veliko Tarnovo, Varna; it will be also exhibited in Ruse, Pleven and other cities, which are related to the work of Nestor Markov.

Special attention to the jubilee of this Bulgarian patriot was given by the community center⁽³⁾ Saglasie 1869 in Pleven, whose founder was the teacher Nestor Markov, venerated by the whole city population.

Many articles devoted to the life and work of Nestor Markov have been published in the national and local press.

The newly published book by Maria Lovdzhieva [1] is an important study of Nestor Markov's life and work.

The sections of the book entitled Biographical notes and Literary and scientific activity remind us of the most important events and deeds of the great patriot.

The section Big family makes us familiar with the fate of his large

family his spouse and their six children who are not only well educated and speaking many languages, but also have dedicated their lives to a devoted service to Bulgaria. Among them there are scholars with international recognition.

The discovered and carefully studied letters from the years 1868-1912 are precious testimonies not only about Nestor Markov, but also about his eminent contemporaries including Tsani Ginchev, Nikola Zlatarski, Grigor Nachovich, captain Petko Voivoda and other important figures in the intellectual history of Bulgaria.

These letters, published or not, which are included in the book, are extremely important for our history and for a large circle of readers, who will be inspired by all these devoted Bulgarian patriots.

A very significant part of the book by Maria Lovdzhieva includes various supplements, which enrich and enlarge the edition, as well as the information about Nestor Markov and his relations with Georgi Rakovski, Vasil Levski, captain Petko Voivode and Stoyan Zaimov. I especially appreciate Supplement 1, in which previously published letters by Nestor Markov are included.

Very precious is also Supplement 2 which contains authentic memoirs by persons, who knew Nestor Markov personally. The reminiscences of his son, the academician Vladimir Markov, introduce us to the family and home of Nestor Markov, revealing the relations between children and parents, old traditions and the pedagogical methods used by his mother and father.

The text by Boyan Ginchev a son of Tsani Ginchev, reflects the long and friendly relations between the two eminent teachers and their families.

The memoirs of the former teacher of Nestor Markov, Stancho Kozhuharov, describe his struggles against the Greek influence, teaching children and adults to sing patriotic songs, for which he was time and again arrested and convicted.

The recollections of the former pupil of Nestor Markov, the first prominent historian of the Bulgarian church, pedagogue and public figure in the new Bulgaria Stanimir Stanimirov, are very valuable too. He pointed out the great ability of his teacher as a Professor in

Turkish language.

Supplement 3 includes, very aptly, Souvenir from Gabrovo in 1876 in which Nestor Markov related the detention of the Gabrovo high school teachers during the April Uprising, their misadventures in Tarnovo prison, while waiting for death penalties and their amnesty by Sultan Murad V. Here Nestor Markov is revealed also as a talented publicist.

In Supplement 4, there are very good photos and facsimiles related to Nestor Markov, his family and friends.

With the archeographic presentation of the letters and documents M. Lovdzhieva is abiding strictly by the rule not to interfere with the original text and to preserve the orthography, style and language of the authors of the documents.

There are many Turkish words and expressions in the text whose translation is given immediately after their appearance in the text.

The authors notes to the text are at the end of the book. In straight brackets is included the unread text, as well as the left unfinished words which are given by the author.

This edition is addressed to a large circle of readers. I do hope that the example of Nestor Markov will be educational for younger audience, because it is not a secret that persons with his character, perfection and patriotism are more than needed in modern Bulgaria.

Notes

- (1) The Bulgarian National Revival is the period around the time of the Liberation from the Ottoman rule during the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878). More precisely toward the end of the 18th and during the 19th century the Bulgarian people started an economic activity and movement for national integration. This marked their reawakening and an urge to establish a national state, known as the Bulgarian National Revival.
- (2) Grecophiles (garkomans in Bulgarian) were followers of the Greek way of life and traditions which hindered the national awareness of the Bulgarian population.

- (3) Community center (chitalishte in Bulgarian) is a library, and an educational and cultural center, which played a crucial role in the Bulgarian National Revival.

References

- [1] Outlines of two epochs: Nestor Markov letters and memoirs. Edited by M. Lovdzhieva. Stiluet, Sofia, 2018, 211 pages. (in Bulgarian).
- [2] Nestor Markov and his contribution to the lexicography and education, Edited by D. Blagoeva, Stiluet, Sofia, 2016. 166 pages. (in Bulgarian).