

BUDAPEST AND BULGARIAN REVIVAL BOOK PUBLISHING

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Abstract

The article presents historical processes as a result of which Budapest was formed as a center of Bulgarian Literary Revival. The main activities of the Bulgarian Publishers are described as well as the historical conditions under which they were working in today's Hungarian capital. An analysis of the publishing production and conclusions on the role of cities in Bulgarian book publishing till 1878 are drawn.

Keywords: *Bulgaria, Budapest, Bulgarian Revival, publishing, XIX century.*

According to the Bulgarian National Bibliography, 45 Bulgarian books were printed in Budapest during the Bulgarian Literary Revival between 1801 and 1877¹. From a bibliometrical point of view this is a small share of the whole number of Bulgarian books printed in the period – only 2,3 percent. At first glance these quantitative parameters do not sound encouraging especially for a plenary report. But a closer look can clearly show how important for the Bulgarian Revival publishing was today's Hungarian capital².

¹ Researchers at the history of Bulgarian book attributed various documents to the national bibliography of Bulgaria so the number varies: M. Stoyanov – 2022 units; I. Bogdanov – 1917 units; N. Teodosiev – 2039. The current ratio of 2.3 percent is considered average of three bibliographies.

² The main problem with bibliography identification of Bulgarian books printed in Budapest is geographical identification of the editions. Some of the books don't have a place of issue on the title page. In the nineteenth century Bulgarian language did not have uniform spelling of the names of the two cities. The toponyms are printed as Buda, Budim, Budin, Budim Grad, Budin Grad, Peshta, Peshti and after 1873 also Budin-Peshta.

The bibliometric – a closer look

For the better understanding of the statistics, it is necessary to provide some explanations about the history of the Bulgarian book in the XIX century Ottoman period. Between 1801 and the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878 there were three stages of the development of the book system. The early period is from 1801 till 1833. During these three decades Bulgarian books were not issued annually, they were mostly with religious content, printed in Cyrillic (Church Slavonic) fonts outside the territory of the Ottoman Empire³.

Since 1833 there were annually registered Bulgarian printed books as this number increased constantly and during the 1840s there were between 10 and 20 editions per year. The books were printed closer to the Bulgarian lands and thanks to enterprising merchants, clerics and intellectuals, printing of books began on the territory of the Ottoman Empire – in Samokov, Thessaloniki and Istanbul⁴. With the advent of secular subjects, most of the books began to be printed with the so-called Russian Civil typeface that was gradually replacing the classic Cyrillic layout of all publications except religious.

³ Kutinchev, Stilian. Pechatarstvoto v Balgaria do Osvobozhdenieto. Sofia : Darzhavna pechatnica, 1920, pp.205–259. Nachov, Nikola. Novobalgarskata kniga i pechatnoto delo u nas ot 1806 do 1877. Sofia : Grafica, 1921. pp. 24–25.

⁴ Drinov, Marin. Parvata balgarska tipografia v Solun i niakoi ot napechatanite v neia knigi. In: Sabrani suchinenia, T. 2, Sofia, 1911, pp. 425–477; Bogdanov, Ivan. Balgarskata kniga prez vekovete. Sofia : Narodna prosveta, 1978, pp. 262–263.

In the years after the Crimean war (1856) the attempts to modernize the Ottoman Empire were very helpful for the growth of the Bulgarian book quantity rate. Bulgarian book publishing became an attractive and profitable activity related to European business practices. The personal and corporative book publishers appeared in this period, and Turkish government print houses were established in Russe and Odrin producing Bulgarian books and periodicals. Just before the Liberation in the years between 1867 and 1876 over 100 Bulgarian books a year had already been printed⁵.

The quantitative parameters of the Bulgarian book production till 1833 indicate unambiguously that Budapest was the main Bulgarian book publishing center in the early modern period. From 1801 to 1833 only 20 Bulgarian books were printed and 15 of them or 75% were printed in Buda. Out of these in 13 books it is mentioned that they were printed in the Royal Hungarian University Press in Buda and in two there is no place of publishing on the title page but according to Nicola Nachov they were printed in the same printing house⁶. An interesting question is why the Bulgarians had decided to print their first modern books precisely on this destination?

Why Budapest?

We can recognize four main reasons that explain the choice of Buda as the main Bulgarian printing center in the first three decades of the XIX century.

⁵ Teodosiev, Nikolai. Katalog na balgarskite knigi 1508–1878, Sofia : Univ. izd. Sv. Kliment Oxridski, 2007, pp. 176–283.

⁶ Nachov, N. ibidem, p. 30.

First of all, at the end of XVIII century the town was already a center of Slavic traders and immigrants from the Ottoman Empire distinguished by its strong patriotism. They create the necessary social environment and provide financial support for issuing books. According to the title pages of the books they were financed precisely by wealthy people mostly from Bulgarian origin. In Neskovich History, published in Buda in 1801, immediately after the title sheet on a separate page it is printed:

*To the noble master
Nikolai Chernoevich
Bulgarian merchant
as a token of my true respect
and gratitude
I dedicate
this history⁷*

A quarter of a century later, things were the same and Anastas Stoqnovich devoted his Catechism printed in Buda in 1825 to the *most patriotic and highly honorable* Mr. Anthony Yoanovich for his support⁸.

The second reason was that the Bulgarians used to take advantage of the Austrian Empire Serbian diaspora which already had extensive experience in publishing Cyrillic books. According to Nikola Nachov with privilege of

⁷ Neskovich, Atanasius. [Istoria na sloveno-bolgarskog naroda iz istoriata g. Raicha i nekih istoricheski knjig. Sostavlena i prostim iazikom spisana sinove Otechestva. Atanasiem Neskovich. V Budim : Pismena Karalevskago Universiteta](#), 1801, p. III.

⁸ Anthony Yoanovich support also the publishing of the first Bulgarian modern schoolbook: Beron, Peter. [Bukvar s razlichni pouchenia](#). Brashov, 1824, 144, IV ill.

Empress Maria Theresia Joseph Kurtsbek opened in 1770 in Vienna a Serbian printing house⁹. After Kurtsbek's death in 1792 the printing press was bought by another Serbian – Stefan Novakovich but he did not succeed in his business entrepreneurship and sold it in 1795 to the Royal Hungarian University Press in Buda. Thus in Buda was created a printing house equipped with Slavonic Cyrillic fonts, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century were constantly used both by Serbs and Bulgarians.

The presence of typographers, compositors and typesetters who can work with Cyrillic texts was a serious motive for Bulgarian men of letter to visit Budapest, because by the end of the XVIII century they were mainly familiar with manuscript literary norms. Furthermore, till the 1830s the Royal Hungarian University Press in Buda had a reputation of the cheapest printing house of Cyrillic texts. This of course was a very important reason for the Bulgarian publishers' choice during the period of the Bulgarian early literary revival. According to Nicola Nachov a quote was transmitted to Yuri Venelin from a letter dated December 10, 1837 by Vassil Aprilov and Nikolay Palauzov, according which the book printing "in Budim" is "at the best price"¹⁰. This opinion is very important for the book historian because Aprilov was one of the greatest businessmen and intellectuals of his time who worked on the vast geographical area between Moscow, Sankt Petersburg, Odesa, Braşov, Vienna and Budapest.

⁹ Nachov, N. *ibidem*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Nachov, N. *Ibidem*, p. 11-12.

In addition, it is important to mention that the significant interest of the Bulgarians in the printing houses in Buda and Pest was related with the strategic meaning of the Danube River as main transport and trade corridor between Central and Southeastern Europe. Throughout the XIX century the river connection between Vienna-Budapest-Belgrade and the Bulgarian Danube ports (Vidin, Russe, Svishtov, etc.) was the main conductor of printing know-how, equipment, supplies and published books¹¹.

Important books and Interesting facts

To demonstrate how important Budapest was for the early Bulgarian modern book, some examples will be given. In 1801 the Royal Hungarian University Press printed Athanasius Neskovich's first known till now printed Bulgarian history¹² – History of the Slavo-Bulgarian People According to Mr. Raich and Some Other Historical Books¹³. Although it was ignored both by historians and experts studying book history because of its language peculiarities this History was a clear demonstration of the awakening of the Bulgarian national consciousness. Neskovich wrote in his preface that the History was commissioned by Bulgarian merchants who convinced him to work on this issue because such a book does not exist. However, even today

¹¹ Zagorov, Vasil. *Balgarskata kniga (1878–1912)*. Sofia, 2014, p. 31–32; Zagorov Vasil and others: *History of the Bulgarian book between the Liberation and Independence (1878-1908)*. Interactive Map:

<https://bgbookhistory.unibit.bg/en> [online, 26.04.2016].

¹² There is some information that in the third quarter of the XVII century Bulgarian Catholic Archbishop Petar Bogdan Bakshev or his successor published in Venice Bulgarian History. There was no copy found of this history till now. In: Dimitrov, Bozhidar. *Petar Bogdan Bakshev – balgarski politik i istorik ot XVII vek*. Sofia : Nauka i izkustvo, 1985, pp. 78–79.

¹³ Neskovich, Atanasius. [*Istoria na sloveno-bolgarskog naroda iz istoriata g. Raicha i nekih istoricheski knjig. Sostavlena i prostim iazikom spisana sinove Otechestva. Atanasiem Neskovich. V Budim : Pismena Karalevskago Universiteta*](#), 1801. 231 p.

Bulgarian historiography rarely mentions the name of Neskovich, but the success of his book is evident from the fact that it was reissued in Buda twice in 1806 and in 1811. For more than four decades until the release of *Tsarstvenik* by Hristaki Pavlovic, published also in Buda in 1844, the Neskovich's *History* was the main printed material for the study of Slavonic and in particular the Bulgarian history¹⁴. Obviously, this first history was so important to Bulgarians and their National Revival that in 1844 Petar Sapunov published it in Bucharest in a Bulgarian language edition¹⁵.

Besides the historical books, many other important Bulgarian texts were printed in Buda during the Revival period. According to Bulgarian bibliography the first printed book in modern Bulgarian language is *Nedelnik*, issued in Rimnik, Romania in 1806 by Sofronius Bishop of Vratsa¹⁶. But many representatives of the period mention another book printed the same year in Buda – *Molitvenuy Krin*. It was described in the first Bulgarian bibliography by Ivan Shopov, published in 1852 in the newspaper named *Tsarigradski Vestnik*. After this it was quoted by other Bulgarian bibliographers and book historians but no copy was found till now. There are many bibliographers like Aleksander Teodorovm-Balan, who did not accept the existence of such a book¹⁷. It will be a big step for Bulgarian book science if our Hungarian library colleagues help us solve this interesting case.

¹⁴ Pavlovich, Hristaki. *Tsarstvenik ili istoria balgarska*. V Budim : Pismena Kr. sveuchiliska Peshtansko, 1844. 80 p.

¹⁵ Neskovich, Atanasius. [Istoriata na slaviano-bolgarskia narod](#). Bucharest : B. I., 1844. [10], 302 p.

¹⁶ Stoianov, M. *Balgarska vazrojdenska knizhnina*. T.1, 1957, p. VIII.

¹⁷ Pogorevlo, V. *Opis na starite pechatni balgarski knigi (1802–1877)*. Sofia, 1923, p. 6.

The first Bulgarian calendar was also published in Buda in 1818 by Tsvetko Georgov. It was important because the counting of time is a crucial marker for the new kind of thinking, which represents the transition and evolution from Medieval to Modern time. There were also many other important books printed in Buda during the first half of the XIX century – Illustrated Holly History by Anastas Stoianovich (1825), Hristaki Pavlovich's Bulgarian Grammar (1836), Bulgarian folk songs and proverbs by Ivan Bogorov (1842) and many others.

According to the eminent Bulgarian book historian Stilian Kutinchev, the decline of Bulgarian book activities in Budapest was related to the establishment of many Cyrillic printing houses on the Balkans – in Wallachia, independent Serbia and also on the European territory of the Ottoman Empire – Solun, Samokov, Tsarigrad, Russe and Odrin¹⁸. The other important reason is linked to the theory of the political Bibliology by Robert Estivals, where the political situation is of the great significance to book publishing¹⁹. The Hungarian uprising from 1848 and the political instability of 1866 were the reason for Bulgarian Publishers to redirect to other cities. Their ventures were risky enough because they repeatedly crossed political and economic boundaries in constant conditions of limited funds. In Bulgaria we do not know enough about the Austrian Empire censorship regulation after the political crisis but if we compare with Nikolay I of Russia censorship reaction

¹⁸ Kutinchev, St. Pechatarstvoto v Balgaria..., p. 163

¹⁹ Estivals, Robert. Problemat za politicheskite bibliolozhki modeli: vchera, dnes I utre. In.: Istorija na knjigata – nacin na zhivot. Sofia, 2002. pp. 47–61.

after the Revolutions of 1848 we can presume that the conditions for foreign publisher activities had become unfavorable in Budapest²⁰.

Indirect role of Budapest for Bulgarian book publishing

Besides being a publishing center for early Bulgarian modern language books Budapest had an important indirect role for the development of Bulgarian printing and publishing. This importance can be seen in the history of one of the first Bulgarian printers – Nikolay Karastoyanov who gradually managed to equip printing house in the 1830s and 1840s in the city of Samokov. Karastoyanov began his book business as a bookbinder, traveling merchant of small religious books and printer of one-leaf icons. After his visit to independent Beograd he decided to print several books in the recently established state of Serbia²¹. In the same period the vast industrialization of printing became reality throughout Europe. Many printing houses tried to modernize their technical equipment and sell their old one. In such a condition Karastoyanov decided to acquire printing inventory. In 1828 he bought from Beograd, Serbia a small screw press and imported it illegally into the Ottoman Empire. Because of the lack of typographic letters he started to print icons with woodcut engraving technique²². In 1835 Karastoyanov decided to expand his printing activities. He started to seek equipment for a letterpress process in Beograd but

²⁰ Zhirkov, G. V. Istorija cenzura v Rossii: http://lawbooks.news/istoriya-jurnalistiki_852/epoha-tsenzurnogo-terrora.html [online, 26.04.2016].

²¹ Zlatarski, Vasil. Daskal Nikolay Karastoianovich I negovata pechatnica. In: Periodichesko spisanie na Bylgarskoto Knizhovno druxhestvo. LXVI, pp. 624–625.

²² Zlatarski, Daskal..., pp. 625–626; Kutinchev, St. Pechatarstvoto v Balgaria... p. 19; Nachov. Novobalgarskata..., p. 96.

eventually he managed to buy it in Budapest from the already mentioned important for Bulgaria printing house – the Royal Hungarian University Press. Karastoyanov acquired and transported 180 kg letters in Samocov and after a while, he started to print books²³. He collected typographical material nearly 10 years to be able to begin his own printing business and finally in 1846 he began to print books on a regular basis.

Almost the same is the destiny of Hristo Gruev Danov. Just like Karastoyanov, Danov began his postgraduate career as a teacher. After a while he became a traveling book merchant and during his travels he decided to print several textbooks to increase the range of products he offered. Danov traveled to Beograd to accomplish this task. In 1858–1859 as a chairman of the partnership of three people Danov decided to check the conditions of book publishing in Budapest. He started to work on his textbooks with Alois Buchansky – a Slovak typographer. In his memoirs the Bulgarian publisher remembers how satisfied he was from the prints of Buchansky. But a sudden misfortune almost destroyed the enterprise of Danov. The third partner, Boyadzhiysky, living in Plovdiv, ceased answering to Danov's letters and did not send him money to pay the printed production. In this situation Danov and Buchansky negotiated for several months and finally the printer agreed to send the books to Svishtov under the condition of cash on delivery. Danov pulled many personal ties and put a lot of effort to be able to release and distribute his books, but finally the

²³ The case with the letters is not clear from the historical point of view. Some documents area arguing if letteres were bought from Beograd: Zlatarski, *Daskal...*, pp. 627–633; Kutinchev, *St. Pechatarstvoto v Balgaria...*, pp. 20–25

enterprise was near profitable, and in the next decades he began to develop successful business²⁴.

After Buchansky – Boyadzhisy case Danov never returned in Budapest but he learned a very important lesson – how to manage his book publishing business successfully. By the time of the Bulgarian Liberation in 1878, Danov became the biggest Bulgarian publisher. The same position he maintained after the Liberation – he started a publishing and printing house in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, and became a mayor of the second biggest city in Bulgaria. The fiftieth anniversary of his publishing house in 1905 was celebrated as a national holiday with state honors. As an act of appreciation to Danov's work in 1934, 23 years after his death, Bulgarians named a village after him – Hristo Danovo. We can say that the rebate of Budapest printer Alois Buchansky plays a decisive role in this development.

Conclusions

From all these considerations it is clear that Budapest has a significant role as a book publishing center in the development of Bulgarian book during the Bulgarian Revival. Bilateral relations between Budapest and Bulgarian lands not only led to the issuance of many important books in Bulgarian language but also boosted the professional development in the field of printing and publishing. It is precisely the important role of Budapest in Bulgarian National Revival that urges Bulgarian researchers to seek closer scientific

²⁴ Barutchiysky, Serafim. Hristo G. danov. Biograficheski ocherk. Plovdiv, 1905, pp. 47–50; Dimitrov, Angel. Knizhariat, kogoto narichaha minister. Sofia, 1988, p. 77.

cooperation with their Hungarian colleagues. The modern Hungarian library resources can help us enrich the information about Bulgarian books printed in Budapest. The documents in Hungarian archives can also give us clarity of many unknown facts about Bulgarian related typographies in Budapest. After all we have to know much more about Hungarian book history to understand better our own. I hope this paper will be helpful for the development of such bilateral scientific contacts between Bulgaria and Hungary in the field of Library Studies and Book History.

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