

REVIEW

OF THE PUBLICATIONS BY SEN. ASS. DR PETAR STOYANOV PARUSHEV
IN COMPETITION FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AREA 2. HUMANITIES
PROFESSIONAL AREA 2.2. HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY
FIELD OF MODERN AND RECENT HISTORY (INCL. HISTORY OF THE BALKANS)
AT PROF DR ASENA ZLATAROV UNIVERSITY IN BURGAS
ANNOUNCED IN THE STATE GAZETTE, ISSUE 65 OF 28TH JULY 2023

Reviewer: Professor Dr Mariana Yovevska, Emeritus Professor of St Cyril and St Methodius University in Veliko Tarnovo (retired), by Order of the Rector of Prof Dr Asena Zlatarov University in Burgas, No ПД 251/28.09.2023

The competition for the position of Associate Professor at Prof Dr Asen Zlatarov University in Burgas, announced in the State Gazette, issue 65 of 28th July 2023, was finalised within the deadline. Only one candidate filed the required application, namely Dr Petar Stoyanov Parushev, senior assistant professor at the same university. To the best of my knowledge, the competition procedure followed the existing normative regulations and the candidate was accepted to the competition.

Petar Parushev holds an MA degree in Balkan Studies from St Cyril and St Methodius University in Veliko Tarnovo, which is a 5-year 10-semester MA program in the area of History. Upon completion of his studies in 1996, he defended his thesis "Greek-Serbian Relations and Bulgarian Opposition Printed Media 1913-1915". He continued his studies as a PhD student at the Institute for Balkan Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Having successfully defended his doctoral thesis "The Case of Cyprus 1960-1974 and Bulgaria" in 2008 he was awarded the title of 'Doctor' with a Diploma No 3345 of 6.04.2009. He began his academic career in 2010/2011 as a part time assistant professor (50%) at Prof Dr Asen Zlatarov University in Burgas, later on as full time senior assistant professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of History and Philosophy. Currently, Dr Petar Stoyanov Parushev works full time for the same department, faculty and university reading courses and carrying out seminars.

For this competition Petar Stoyanov Parushev has presented his habilitation work (*The Bosnian Crisis 1908-1909: The Great Powers And Bulgaria*) and several other publications. The book was published by Prof Dr Asen Zlatarov University Press: Burgas, 2023 (ISBN 978-619-7559-51-4) and comprises 293 pages, including 20 pages of significant documents in Bulgarian translation, followed by a List of archival and published sources, a Bibliography, a Name Index, and a List of Abbreviations. The book further provides a brief summary in English.

The events unfolding in the Balkans during 1908-1909 have long been a focal point within European and Bulgarian historiography. Their intensity and historical significance deemed them pivotal for the history not only of Bulgaria but also that of the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary. Their repercussions reverberated across the Balkans, profoundly shaping the region's historical trajectory and leaving an indelible mark on European history. Moreover, these events played a structural role in shaping international politics and diplomacy throughout the first of the 20th century.

The two powerful empires, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian, loomed large over Southeastern Europe and, by extension, the entire European continent. Their influence extended across territories, populations, economic potential and international relations. Unsurprisingly, scholars from various countries, particularly those directly affected by the events such as Austria, Turkey, Russia, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavian states, now Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, have delved into this complex historical tapestry. It is essential to acknowledge Dr Petar Parushev's nuanced understanding of this vast array of authors and perspectives. His expertise becomes evident through the thorough explanations and clarifications he provides regarding the intricate events of the time.

One commendable aspect of the author's approach is his meticulous referencing of Bulgarian historiography alongside foreign publications. This meticulousness not only acquaints the reader with Bulgarian authors but also highlights the extensive and diverse contributions made by Bulgarian historical scholars. Notably, Zorka Parvanova's interpretation of the 1908 events within the Ottoman Empire as an endeavour towards constitutional republican rule offers valuable insights¹. It sheds light on the challenges faced in preserving the intricate

¹ Първанова, З. Между неосъществения хюриет и неизбежната война. Националните движения в Европейска Турция и Младотурския режим 1908 – 1912 г., С., 2002.

mosaic of nationalities, ethnicities, and religions within the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Additionally, Radoslav Mishev, an esteemed authority on Austria-Hungary's foreign and domestic policies during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, meticulously examines Vienna and Sofia's diplomacy. His exploration of the Serbian factor in various decisions concerning the Balkans adds depth to our understanding of the region's intricate geopolitical landscape.²

The period of 1908-1909 stands as a multifaceted epoch, extensively examined from various angles. In this rich historical tapestry, Petar Parushev emerges as a meticulous scholar, dedicating significant attention to the late twentieth and early twenty-first-century works. His expertise shines through his comprehensive understanding of their publications, drawing extensively from their scientific accomplishments and emphasising their significant findings. In this historiographical survey, it is noteworthy that Dr Petar Parushev stands as the latest torchbearer of the tradition rooted in the University of Veliko Tarnovo. He seamlessly continues the lineage of historians who have delved into the events of 1908-1909 in the Balkans, notably focusing on the declaration of Bulgaria as an independent state.

During the latter half of the 20th century, Professor Petar Goranov illuminated the economic dimensions of Bulgarian independence in 1908. Following his legacy, Professor Radoslav Mishev, a distinguished academic in Veliko Tarnovo, captivated his students, including myself, with lectures on independence and guided our understanding through his insightful publications. Each generation, shaped by the expertise of their predecessors, approached the Bosnian crisis from distinct professional angles. Professor Mishev explored Austria-Hungary's role, whereas my perspective was rooted in the socio-political realities of Bosnia. The mantle was then passed to subsequent Veliko Tarnovo graduates, Penka Peeva and Petar Parushev, both of whom have made significant scholarly contributions.

² **Мишев, Р.** Австро-унгарската политика към България в навечерието на Анексионната криза (1906 – 1908 г.) Историкът. Гражданин и учен. Сборник в чест на акад. Илчо Димитров, С., 2001, с. 297; **Мишев, Р.** България във външната политика на Австро-Унгария 1898 – 1912., В. Търново, 2004; **Мишев, Р.** История на Австро-Унгария 1867 – 1918, Велико Търново, 2005; **Мишев, Р.** Факторът Сърбия в отношенията между Австро-Унгария и България 1878 – 1914 г. **Мишев, Р.** Австро-Унгария и идеята за обявяване на независимостта на България 1889 – 1908 г., Исторически преглед, кн. 3., 1989; **Мишев, Р.** Хабсбургският орел над Балканите. Епизоди от дейността на Австро-унгарската тайна дипломация и разузнавателни служби в България 1878 – 1915 г., Велико Търново, 1992.

This detailed historiographical review eloquently demonstrates that Parushev's monograph carries the torch of the emerging Veliko Tarnovo graduates' school. This tradition, deeply entrenched in examining the most pivotal events surrounding Bulgarian independence and the intricate foreign policy dynamics of 1908-1909, is continued with scholarly dedication.

The extensive historiographical corpus surrounding the brief yet significant period of 1908-1909 explains why the author, even in the absence of original archival documentation, stands as a serious researcher. He deftly navigates the documentary foundations of numerous publications, curating the most compelling documents related to the Bosnian Crisis, thoughtfully translated into Bulgarian for the benefit of his readership.

Worth noting are the accompanying visual aids, including photographs and maps, which enrich and complement the textual narrative. While the existing collection includes images of rulers, diplomats, and politicians, there is potential to expand this repertoire. Incorporating visuals depicting non-elite contemporaries and snapshots of cities associated with the events would provide readers with a vivid portrayal of early 20th-century modernity, encapsulating the essence of both populations and urban landscapes.

In this sea of diverse authors and publications, Dr Petar Parushev distinguishes his monograph through a unique organizational approach. He diverges from the conventional Hara Paradigm, typically comprising three chapters with three paragraphs each. Instead, he crafts his narrative across two chapters, each with three paragraphs, culminating in a well-structured conclusion. This departure is made possible by the strategic positioning of the events leading up to the Bosnian crisis and those occurring during the crisis itself.

Chapter One meticulously dissects the diplomacy of European states in broad strokes, providing a foundational understanding. In Chapter Two, Parushev meticulously examines Balkan diplomatic endeavours originating from Sofia and Belgrade, delving into the intricacies of regional responses. Notably, the final two paragraphs of Chapter One are dedicated to the reactions in Balkan capitals following the Young Turk Revolution. However, these responses were not immediate reactions to the unfolding events in the Ottoman Empire. Instead, they were nuanced reactions to the discourse emanating from the foreign ministries of European powers. In essence, the responses in Sofia and Belgrade were shaped as a reaction to prevailing European attitudes and international policies concerning the unfolding events in Constantinople and the European Ottoman provinces.

In the intricate tapestry of Balkan politics, Serbia stood as an independent entity while Bulgaria, though independent in some aspects, remained intertwined with the Ottoman Empire, particularly in foreign policy matters. Both nations, however, grappled with unresolved issues concerning their compatriots under Ottoman rule. The prospect of a republican or egalitarian constitutional shift within the Ottoman Empire posed concerns in both Belgrade and Sofia. While political reforms and the notion of civil rights were introduced within the Ottoman Empire, these changes did not automatically grant independence. Many Serbs and Bulgarians found themselves residing outside the borders of their respective nation-states. The democratic ideals and just innovations, while commendable, jeopardized the protection of these populations under the clauses of the Congress of Berlin. Initially, Serbia and Bulgaria maintained a cautious distance from the events unfolding in Constantinople, neither openly supporting nor opposing them. Their responses were contingent upon the orientation of European diplomacy, a nuanced approach that underpins the structure of the book. This perspective is encapsulated in the book's title, "The Bosnian Crisis 1908-1909, the Great Powers, and Bulgaria," a thematic focal point underscored and developed by Petar Parushev in his scholarly work.

Parushev skilfully reframes the historical events of 1908-1909 from this unique angle, weaving together the diplomatic intricacies of the Great Powers during the Young Turk Revolution and the Bosnian annexation. He seamlessly integrates these global dynamics with Sofia's foreign policy initiatives aimed at Bulgaria's emancipation and international recognition as an independent state. The narrative meticulously traces speeches, diplomatic negotiations, shuttles, meetings, and the subtle nuances of discussions and agreements, portraying historical events with accuracy and responsibility.

A notable challenge faced during this period was the variance in calendars across the nations involved in international relations. Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, Greece, and Russia adhered to the Julian calendar, reflecting an old-style dating system. In contrast, the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary followed the Gregorian calendar. This calendrical divergence created a 13-day difference in dating sources and publications used by Petar Parushev. Consequently, he had to meticulously cite both calendars to accurately compare these sources. This complexity underscores the challenges encountered by authors dealing with multinational events, even within a two-year timeframe.

Dr Parushev's meticulous attention to detail extends to subtle nuances, including the correct use of plural and singular forms concerning "Bosnia and Herzegovina." The singular form is employed when referring to Bosnia and Herzegovina as a singular entity, while the plural form is used when indicating Bosnia, Herzegovina, and the Novi Pazar Sanjak. The complexity of the term lies in its encompassing six sanjaks, with the Novi Pazar Sanjak holding a distinct status during the Eastern Crisis of 1908-1909, or the Bosnian Crisis. It was separated from Bosnia and Herzegovina, returned in its entirety to the Ottoman Empire, and the troops of both the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires were stationed on its territory.

Remarkably, during the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908-1909, the matter of the Novi Pazar Sanjak did not surface prominently. Both the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary strategically deployed their armies in this region, effectively serving as a geopolitical buffer. This tactical move effectively subdued the fervour for unification felt by Serbia and Montenegro. Geographically, the Novi Pazar Sanjak acted as a barrier, tempering the ambitions of these Balkan states, thus defining the intricate political landscape of the time.

Additionally, the distinction between Bosniaks and Bosnians is clarified. Bosnian Muslims, initially Christians who converted to Islam, now officially identify as Bosniaks, whereas a Bosnian is anyone residing within the country's borders, irrespective of religion. Historiographically, debates on the origin of Bosnian Muslims persist. Serbian historiography suggests that Orthodox Christians converted, while Croatian historiography argues for the conversion of Catholics. However, historical evidence from the 15th-16th centuries reveals the use of "Bosnian Muslims" and "Bosniak" without specifying the religion from which they converted. Acknowledging both possibilities, therefore, appears plausible.

Dr Petar Parushev's monograph, *The Bosnian Crisis 1908-1909, the Great Powers and Bulgaria*, stands as a significant milestone in Bulgarian historiography. It not only solidifies his scholarly contribution but also marks a new phase in his professional journey. This monograph stands as a testament to Petar Parushev's evolution as a specialist in Balkan history. Its subject matter, significantly distant in time, territory, and themes from his dissertation, marks a notable departure. His doctoral research delved into the intricacies of the declaration of Cyprus as an independent state, exploring the foreign policies of England, Greece, and the Republic of Turkey in the latter half of the twentieth century. In contrast, this peer-reviewed work delves into entirely new and distinct realms of inquiry.

Through this book, Parushev asserts himself as an author well-versed in the intricate political developments of England, the Ottoman Empire, Greece, Austria-Hungary, and Russia within the Balkans. His deep understanding of these political trajectories enriches the scholarly landscape, demonstrating his expertise in navigating complex historical narratives. In addition to his habilitation thesis/monograph, the candidate also submitted another significant work (231 pages) based on his doctoral thesis, titled "The Cyprus Question 1960-1974 and Bulgaria," which was published in 2023 by the University Press "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov". Peter Parushev's academic contributions extend beyond monographs, comprising 30 published articles and papers presented at scientific conferences. Additionally, he has authored two comprehensive studies in Bulgarian, with only one being co-authored with a colleague from his Department. Furthermore, Parushev has authored two textbooks for the discipline "History of the Balkan Peoples," enriched with commentaries, documents, and illustrations, catering to the needs of his teaching responsibilities. The range of his publications is diverse, yet predominantly centred around the History of the Balkans and Europe, showcasing his extensive expertise in these areas. In the realm of academia, Peter Parushev has actively participated in both international and national scientific conferences held in Bulgaria. Moreover, his involvement in various foreign and Bulgarian university projects spanning the years 2008-2010 and 2012-2016 highlights his dedication to collaborative research and scholarly initiatives.

Without delving into a detailed analysis of these publications, it is evident that these contributions portray the candidate for the position of Associate Professor as a dedicated, prolific, and highly regarded scholar. At the Prof Dr Asen Zlatarov University in Burgas, he has not only taught but continues to impart knowledge through lecture courses encompassing essential historical disciplines such as "History of the Balkan Peoples," "Economic History," "Historiography," "History of Bulgaria 1878-1944," and practical training in Museums and Libraries.

In conclusion, I firmly assert that Dr Petar Parushev, based on the depth and breadth of his research presented in this monograph, unequivocally meets the criteria for the academic position of "Associate Professor." Consequently, I confidently endorse his election to this position.

V. Tarnovo, 25th October 2023

Assoc. Prof. Dr Mariana Yovevska, Emeritus Professor