

The *Kircali* Time as Metonymy: History as Emotion

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The Ottoman period is a legacy with which Bulgarians have to deal. It contributes considerably to how the others perceive Bulgarians (and the Balkan region as a whole), and how Bulgarians/Balkans observe themselves. Interpreting this period as part of the large narrative of the national Bulgarian history, the Ottoman rule is defined in Bulgaria as the period of suffering. Therefore, the analysis of attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire and the Ottomans helps clarify the process of creating positive/negative perceptions about historical events from a national perspective, and also helps deal with an issue which is important for every national historiography: the creation of the notion of the Other.

The main aim of this chapter is to investigate the usage and interpretation of the Ottoman legacy as part of the national Bulgarian ideology and to shed light on some techniques of manipulation and creation of stereotypes based on texts that deal with the Ottoman past. Hence, the chapter falls into two parts: the first will briefly present the chronology of development of national ideas in the Bulgarian national state and how they influenced historical scholarship and education; the second will examine in detail texts on the *kircali* time¹ in order to look more closely into the techniques of manipulation of historical facts and creation of stereotypical images.

An emergent nationalism

In Bulgaria, the national historical canon developed after 1878 as part of the official nation-state ideology which was legitimized by the newly created state. Bulgaria, as the rest of Balkan states, was eager to emancipate from the Ottoman Empire. The main motivation was to deny the Ottoman past and to adopt a completely new line of development which was focused on accomplishing the national ideals.²

In an overview of Bulgarian society in the early twentieth century, Rumen Daskalov distinguishes several sub-periods of pre-communist time with different characteristics and different levels of nationalism. After the period of liberalism

¹ The period of decentralization in the Ottoman provinces at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century is known in Bulgarian historiography as the *kircali* time because of the numerous bands (*kircalis*) which flooded the central Balkan lands.

² For a thorough analysis of the Ottoman legacy, see Maria Todorova, 'The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans', in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint in the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. L. Carl Brown (New York, 1995), 45-77. On the attitude towards the Ottoman legacy in different Balkan historiographies, see Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2001); Evangelia Balta, *Ottoman Studies and Archives in Greece* (Istanbul, 2003).

in the 1890s and 1910s, a wave of nationalism arose during the Balkan Wars and the First World War. This was, however, a brief stage which declined with the ensuing disappointments: the crash of the national dreams of a greater Bulgaria, and financial catastrophes after the peace treaties. The revolutionary enthusiasm, characteristic of the second half of the nineteenth century, disappeared after the wars.³ The nationalism, however, became a definite tendency and state policy after the 1934 coup by radical-right political forces. This ideological tendency became even stronger during the Second World War. A committee for national propaganda was established in order to control media and culture.⁴

Ideas in the education system also followed those stages. The optimistic and euphoric atmosphere within the newly created state corresponded to the educational thesis about the stability of the nation and its further successful development. From a historical perspective, this thesis was supported by examples of resistance against foreign conquerors, the heroic deeds and high spirit of the Bulgarian people. The texts offering such instances contributed to the effort to increase the national consciousness and self-esteem. The idea of the unification of all Bulgarians within the borders of the nation-state was also very much promoted.⁵

After 1945, the communist regime completely changed the ideological trend in historical scholarship. Under the imposed Marxist ideology, the methodological approach to history became very narrow. As a result, the classes and class relations became the focus of historical investigation and for a certain period replaced the concentration on the national idea. This consensus regarding the ideological basis of Bulgarian historiography made it very monolithic and congruent with a certain official line, excluding various kinds of interpretation. Nevertheless, several periods of development of Bulgarian historiography in the communist period can be distinguished. The 1950s were characterized by a comprehensive political propaganda which saturated historical texts. This was replaced, however, in the 1960s by a gradual professionalization of historical scholarship,⁶ a continuity in themes and a return of the positivist methodology.⁷ Because of the imposition of historical materialism as the only 'scientific method of research', historical analyses focused on economic development, modes of production and class relations.

³ Rumén Daskalov, *Balgarskoto obshtestvo, 1878-1934* [Bulgarian Society, 1878-1934], vol. 2 (Sofia, 2005), 431.

⁴ Kiril Chukanov, 'Balgarskata natsionalna propaganda i neinata institutsionalizatsia prez 40-te godini' [The National Bulgarian Propaganda and Its Institutionalization in the 1940s], *Anamnezis* 3 (2006): 73-103.

⁵ It is argued, however, that there are no chauvinistic ideas in Bulgarian history textbooks.

⁶ Ivan Elenkov, 'Istoričeskata nauka v Balgaria prez epohata na komunizma: institutsionalna organizatsia i funktsii' [Historical Scholarship in Bulgaria in the Era of Communism: Institutional Organization and Functions], in *Istoria na NRB. Regimat i obshtestvoto* [History of the National Republic of Bulgaria: The Regime and Society], ed. Ivaylo Znepolski (Sofia, 2009), 627.

⁷ Maria Todorova, 'Bulgarian Historical Writings on the Ottoman Empire', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 12 (Spring 1995): 99.

The nationalistic propaganda, however, returned within the Communist Party's rhetoric in the 1960s and intensified in 1970s and 1980s. It was viewed as a factor in society's unification.⁸ The party 'rediscovered' the unifying role of the common fatherland and the common past. Moreover, communist historiography returned to the rehabilitation and glorification of great figures of the medieval past as a model of leadership which could be used and emulated by the centralized totalitarian state.⁹ The political elite supported nationalism as an ideological tenet in historical studies and used it for self-legitimization.¹⁰ Because of the ideological significance of history, the role of the historian appeared to be politically coloured.¹¹

In the post-communist period after 1989, the clear ideological line dissolved. There was a need to reformulate the ideological basis of the society and set new criteria, common values to replace the communist clichés. In an article in 1991, Maria Todorova focused on the gaps in Bulgarian historiography.¹² One was the fact that Bulgarian historians remained apart from the great debates in the humanities and the social sciences.¹³ As a result of historians' resistance to criticism, a serious debate about a general rethinking of Bulgarian historiography and its development has not been initiated.¹⁴ In his analysis of Bulgarian historiography, Höpken claims that in the 1990s the nation remained the main object of investigation, and nationalism the main research and interpretative paradigm.¹⁵ The approach to writing history was influenced more by 'continuity' than 'change'.¹⁶

The situation in the education system and in history education followed similar lines of development. Cosmopolitanism and tolerance, the concept of living in a multicultural society, became the focus of the democratic education system. A

⁸ Todorova also detects this rise in the 1960s and 1970s which reached its culmination in the 1980s. See *ibid.*, 99-100.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 100. The dominance of the national idea is evident in Mito Isusov's lecture to the Second National Historical Assembly in 1981. There he outlines directions for development of historical research and specifies as main targets of investigation: the Bulgarian contribution to world history; the national phenomenon – nation, national memory and consciousness. See Elenkov, 'Istoricheskata nauka', 623.

¹¹ Elenkov, 'Istoricheskata nauka', 642.

¹² Maria Todorova, 'Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Bulgaria', *American Historical Review* 97, 4 (1992): 1105-1117.

¹³ Unfortunately, the article did not set off a debate in the Bulgarian historical community. Nor did the tome *The Balkan 19th Century*, ed. Diana Mishkova (Sofia, 2006) which offered a platform for debate on some of the most important issues of nineteenth-century Balkan history but was not discussed by historians.

¹⁴ Höpken also underlines that there is no will for self-evaluation (and self-reflection). In Antoaneta Zapryanova, Blagovest Nyagulov and Iliyana Marcheua, 'Istoriografiata mezhdú priemstvenost i promyana' [Historiography between Continuity and Change], *Istoricheski pregled* 1-2 (2005): 34.

¹⁵ Zapryanova, Nyagulov and Marcheua, 'Istoriografiata mezhdú', 30. Besides the fact that the observation is absolutely correct, it should also be mentioned that a comparative research of the Balkan historiographies demonstrates that the nationalism of Bulgarian historiography over the past fifteen years has been very moderate. *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

total reform of content and methodology in 1990-1994 required the abolishment of all current textbooks.¹⁷ Not only were ideological stereotypes abandoned, but the scope of the historical narrative about the previous, i.e. communist period was considerably diminished. Historical scholarship needed time in order to produce a balanced account of the communist past.¹⁸ The other historical periods were presented with a more universalistic interpretation, which blended the national history into the world-historical narrative.¹⁹

The starting point of the interpretation of Ottoman history by Bulgarian historiography is *History of the Bulgarians* by Konstantin Jirecek, published simultaneously in Czech and German in 1875. He established the standard approach to the Ottoman period in Bulgarian history as the darkest and most deplorable one and also 'contributed' some of the common clichés of Bulgarian historiography. The studies and textbooks which appeared in the ensuing decades were deeply influenced by Jirecek's interpretations, ideas and rhetoric.²⁰ The history textbooks issued in the new national state after the Liberation (1878) have been examined in detail.²¹ Briefly, the Ottoman period is defined as 'the most difficult period' and 'the greatest catastrophe' in Bulgarian history.²² There is, however, a certain development of the view of the Ottoman past. The early accounts are very moderate. The authors recognize the historical development that occurred over the five centuries and differentiate between the conditions of life in the fifteenth-to-sixteenth and eighteenth-to-nineteenth centuries.²³ In fact, the conflict between Greeks and Bulgarians is emphasized, as well as the spread of Greek influence as a threat to the cultural assimilation of the Bulgarians. In this context, the Ottoman government is described as an 'arbiter' in the conflict. Later, the treatment of the Ottoman period is reduced to a brief description of 'the greatest catastrophe in Bulgarian history'. The emphasis is on the glorious period of the national emancipation movement, the so-called Bulgarian Revival of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Todorova maintains that there was

¹⁷ Maria Radeva, 'Prehodi i preustroistvo v istoricheskoto obrazovanie – transformatsiata prez 90-te' [Transitions and Reformation of History Education: The Transformation in the 1990s], *Istoria* 2-3 (1998): 41.

¹⁸ Zapryanova, Nyagulov and Marcheua, 'Istoriografiata mezhdu', 33.

¹⁹ Radeva, 'Prehodi i preustroistvo', 42.

²⁰ E.g., Nikola Stanev, *Balgaria pod igo. Vazrazhdane i Osvobozhdenie 1393-1878* [Bulgaria under the Yoke: Revival and Liberation 1393-1878] (Sofia, 1928); Ivan Pastuhov, *Balgarska istoria* [Bulgarian History] (Sofia, 1943); Stefan Bobchev, *Istoria na balgarskii narod (za gimnazii i sredni uchilishta)* [History of the Bulgarian People (for high schools)] (Plovdiv-Svishtov-Ruschuk, 1881); Stefan Bobchev, *Kratki razkazi is balgarska istoria* [Brief Accounts of Bulgarian History] (Plovdiv, 1883); Dragan Manchov, *Izvod ot balgarska istoria* [Excerpt from Bulgarian History] (Plovdiv, 1879).

²¹ Maria Radeva, 'Uchebnitsite po balgarska istoria (1879-1900) i vazpitavaneto na natsionalni chuvstva i natsionalno saznanie' [The Textbooks on Bulgarian History (1879-1900) and the Cultivation of National Sentiments and Consciousness], *Godishnik na SU, Istoricheski fakultet* 75 (1982): 89-123.

²² Meanwhile it is argued that the attitude towards 'Turks' is 'positive' and 'tolerant'. *Ibid.*, 96.

²³ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

no 'real hiatus' in the general evaluation of Ottoman rule; there was, conversely, a remarkable continuity. All general accounts, without exception, stress the negative effects of the protracted Ottoman period, depicting it as inherently alien to the political, administrative, religious and cultural traditions of the Bulgarians'.²⁴

This mode of presentation of the Ottoman past, indeed, continued in the communist period. In the 1950s the viewpoint was very monolithic: the Ottoman Empire had a definite destructive influence on the historical development of the Bulgarians. Its governing is described as 'ruthless exploitation which was an obstacle for the historical development of Bulgarians'.²⁵ (Todorov used words such as 'biased', 'schematization', 'contradiction' when defining the attitude of Bulgarian historiography towards the Ottoman rule).²⁶ The 1960s and 1970s maintain this discourse. During the 1980s the tendency to present stereotypical images while obscuring the facts continued. The 'drama' of Islamization and the 'primitive Ottoman violence' are at the centre of the narrative.²⁷

Again in the 1990s the main definitions are 'Asiatic' and 'Oriental'. Many of the previous notions are also represented in the newly issued textbooks – about 'conservatism and fanaticism'; 'plunder and pillage'; religious and ethnic discrimination; corruption and abuses as a norm of the Ottoman Empire.²⁸ Isov argues that the perception of the Ottoman period is very stable because of the ethnocentric viewpoint on history. Teachers are not stimulated to reflect the changes in the textbooks' content; instead they mainly reproduce the familiar accounts about the Ottoman Empire.²⁹ The old ideas infiltrated into the new books because of a lack of reformation of the academic historical media; the institutions and the main figures in the historical field remained the same. However, it is also true that these are gradually losing their status as new trends and attitudes already emerge in the society. The main conception of state education programs and regulations concentrates on values based on European integration, toleration and understanding of multicultural society.³⁰ In such atmosphere the moderate interpretations of Ottoman history have gained prevalence.³¹

²⁴ Todorova, 'Bulgarian Historical Writings', 115.

²⁵ Mumun Isov, *Nai-razlichniat sased. Obrazat na osmantsite (turtsite) i Osmanskata imperia (Turtsia) v balgarskite uchebniitsi po istoria prez vtorata polovina na XX vek* [The Most Different Neighbour: The Image of the Ottomans (Turks) and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) in the Bulgarian History Textbooks in the Second Half of the 20th Century] (Sofia, 2005), 154.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 235-236.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 312-313.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

³⁰ See, e.g., 'Darzhvni obrazovatelni iziskvania za uchebno sadarzhanie. Kulturno-obrazovatelna oblast: Obshtestveni nauki, grazhdansko obrazovanie i religia' [State Educational Regulations for School Content, Cultural-Educational Area: Social Sciences, Civil Education, and Religion], *Darzhaven vestnik* 48 (2000): 92-93.

³¹ They belonged mainly to Ottomanists, as noted by Prof. Tsvetana Georgieva, Prof. Vera Mutafchieva and Dr. Svetlana Ivanova, but not only they. Rayna Gavrilova's texts must also be mentioned.

One has to take into account, however, that in the pluralistic environment of non-totalitarian society professional historians lost their monopoly over historical knowledge and talking about history. Not only the Ottomanists, specialists in the Bulgarian Revival period, anthropologists and sociologists offer their interpretations of the Ottoman period, but also non-specialists.³² Thus, the state historical institutions and education presenting the official standpoint are only two of the many channels for influencing the society and spreading the national ideology. These work in parallel (and in competition) with many others such as newspapers, television, internet and movies, and in many cases the latter are much more powerful.

History as myth: The Ottoman period as the tragic moment, the *kircali* time as metonymy

In this second part I will analyze the ahistorical narrative about the national past which constitutes the national ideology. It can be regarded rather as a myth which replaces the (hi)story. In this concise version, the five centuries of Ottoman governance are compressed into a short narrative which presents the main features of the period. The specifics and tendencies in different centuries are eliminated so that the period that is presented becomes monolithic. This approach to analyzing national history is very successfully used by Lucian Boia in his book *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*.³³ There he deconstructs the main elements of the national Romanian paradigm: origins; continuity; unity; the Romanians and the Others; the ideal ruler. He demonstrates how, on the basis of erasing specificities and simplifying the account, the historical facts are manipulated and the big images and stereotypes are created.

In the case of the national Bulgarian historiography, the Ottoman period is the tragic period of suffering of the nation. Moreover, the Bulgarian national narrative succeeded to compress this historical time into a period of about twenty to thirty years, which represents in an essentialized mode the features of the Ottoman governance in Bulgarian lands. The story concerning the so-called *kircali* time is very influential because it was a time of violence and strong emotions. Hence it is possible to achieve, with the help of the story of the *kircali* time, a powerful influence over the audience because: (1) the story can be very emotionally coloured; and (2) it is easy to categorize people into clear roles and to burden them with designations as 'the Good', 'the Bad', 'the oppressors' and 'the oppressed'. Thus, the *kircali* time is used as a scenario for a story-illustration of the whole Ottoman period. Although it constitutes only a few paragraphs in history textbooks, the narrative for the *kircali* time is very indicative of the

³² In most cases those are extreme nationalists who want to disseminate their interpretation of Bulgarian history. See the activities and publications of the Tangra TaNakRa Foundation: <http://tangra-bg.org>.

³³ Boia, *History and Myth*.

mechanisms of manipulating historical data and creating stereotypes. Therefore, I will investigate in detail the available texts on the *kircali* time in order to present clearly, step by step, the mechanism for creating stereotypes and manipulating historical facts.

My aim in this chapter is to analyze, by presenting a particular period of history and its interpretation in the national Bulgarian historiography, what is the position of a national historiography towards diverse ethnic and religious groups and how stereotypes for them have been formed. The image of the Ottomans in Bulgarian historiography is that of oppressors who conquered Bulgarian lands; caused demographic collapse by killing a large part of the Bulgarian population; stopped the development of already advanced social and economic processes in Bulgarian society; caused backwardness, determined by their own political, economic and cultural primitivism; and, finally, oppressed Bulgarians during five hundred years. Therefore, the period of Ottoman rule is referred to, as in many other Balkan historiographies, as the 'Turkish yoke' – an emotionally burdened term, representing the evaluation of the period as foreign oppression, and misleadingly replacing 'Ottoman' with 'Turkish'.

The selected historical moment – the *kircali* time – was very brief, but also quite significant for constructing and understanding the Bulgarian historical narrative. The main task of the *kircali* time's account in particular is to emphasize how the Bulgarian nation suffered under Ottoman rule. This historical period – the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century – is convenient because it contains open conflicts, diverse characters, and controversies over their acts. Hence, it illustrates how a dramatic historical period is interpreted by a national historiography. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire, including today's Bulgarian lands, suffered a period of anarchy caused by the decentralization of the governmental system. The Balkan provinces were ruined by local bandits (called in Bulgarian historiography *kircalis*)³⁴ and governed by local Muslim notables (*ayans*) who replaced the officials sent by the central authority. If the national history is the current mythology,³⁵ then the *kircali* time in Bulgarian national history is the period of trial for the mythical character (i.e., the Bulgarian nation).³⁶ And,

³⁴ Actually the emphasis on *kircalis* is incorrect because in the Ottoman documents can also be found *dağlı eşkiyası* ('mountain bandits') as well as many other terms used for bandits.

³⁵ As the classical myth, the national historical narrative has hero(es), tests and trials, struggles (with the Evil), glorious periods and victories, which makes it a story of the nation's (legendary) life. Therefore, people find their heroes in the national history.

³⁶ The journal *Historical Future* has offered a discussion of interpretation of the Ottoman domination in Bulgarian historiography. Even if some of Mutafchieva's remarks are appropriate, Lory's text presents the exact attitude of Bulgarians towards the *kircali* time. He notes that the Ottoman period is portrayed as a tragic one with deep, dark nuances. The traumatism of *continual* suffering created a notion of the *perpetual* suffering of the Bulgarian nation. See Bernard Lory, 'Razsajdenia varhu istoricheskia mit "Pet veka ni klahu"' [Reflections on the Historical Myth 'Five Centuries We Had Been Slaughtered'],

consequently, it is exploited for constructing manipulative images and stereotypes of the Others in the national historiography.

The Textbooks

The selected texts, seen as 'representative' of the development of the national Bulgarian canon in the given periods, do not include specialized studies on the *kircali* time. The latter are too laden with controversial viewpoints and details. Instead of deeper analysis, the accounts included present the mainstream standpoint of national Bulgarian historiography about the Ottoman rule in Bulgarian lands. They are, as mentioned earlier, intended for a wide public. Therefore, brief descriptions and distinctly stated assessments create a clear image of the historical period in question; the chosen texts are extracted from academic histories and school textbooks.

After the formation of the national state in 1878, five books of Bulgaria history were issued.³⁷ They are not original studies but compilations based mainly on Irechek's study and some Russian books. Moreover, these were the first years of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and its curricula were still in progress. Since the ministry was not yet able to provide detailed instructions for each grade, those books were used by teachers as general guides for teaching history in various grades. Irechek's influence on the authors is very strong; not only his ideas and theses but also his way of structuring a book into certain sections became a tradition in Bulgarian historiography. By the 1920s and 1930s, special curricula and agendas for each grade had been prepared. In that period the textbooks³⁸

Istorichesko badeshte 1 (1997): 92-98; Vera Mutafchieva, 'Nyakoi razsajdenia otnosno razsajdeniata na Bernard Lori varhu istoricheskia mit "Pet veka ni klaha"' [Some Notes on Bernard Lory's Reflections on the Historical Myth 'Five Centuries We Had Been Slaughtered'], *Istorichesko badeshte* 2 (1997): 75-80. Some common features of representation of the Ottoman past can be found in all Balkan historiographies. Romanian historiography, for example, is scrupulously analyzed by Boia. Romanians, like Bulgarians, view themselves as heroes, who stopped the Ottoman conquest and saved Europe from the Muslim threat. Meanwhile they viewed themselves as victims who suffered under Ottoman rule: 'They had been obliged for centuries to keep their hands on the sword rather than the pen, in order to defend Europe from the expansion of Islam'. See Boia, *History and Myth* 38.

³⁷ Stefan Bobchev, *Istoriya na balgarskij narod* [History of the Bulgarian People] (Plovdiv-Sofia-Ruschuk, 1881); Stefan Bobchev, *Kratak uchebnik varhu balgarskata istoriya ot naj-staroto vreme do dnes* [Concise Textbook on Bulgarian History from Ancient Times until Today] (Plovdiv, 1882); Dragan Manchov, *Uchebnik balgarska istoriya za sredni uchilishta* [Textbook on Bulgarian History for High Schools] (Plovdiv-Svishtov-Solun, 1884); Dobri Ganchev, *Uchebnik po balgarskata istoriya* [Textbook on Bulgarian History] (Plovdiv, 1888); Stefan Bobchev, *Istoriya na balgarskiya narod* [History of the Bulgarian People] (third edition: Plovdiv, 1899).

³⁸ Ivan Popov and K. Grancharov, *Obshta i balgarska istoriya* [General and Bulgarian History] (Sofia, 1923); Gavril Katsarov and Z. Stoyanov, *Obshta i balgarska istoriya* [General and Bulgarian History] (Sofia, 1927); Nikola Stanev, *Balgarska i obshta istoriya* [General and Bulgarian History] (Sofia, 1930); Ivan Kepov and Vana Kepova, *Obshta i balgarska istoriya* [General and Bulgarian History] (Plovdiv, 1932); K. Grancharov and Ivan Popov, *Obshta i balgarska istoriya* [General and Bulgarian History] (Sofia, 1932); Bozhidar Bozhikov, L. Lenkova, Vana Kepova and Ivan Sarafov, *Istoriya* [History]

combine European and Bulgarian history, and students get an impression of the general historical context – for instance, the text about the *kircali* time is preceded by Napoleon's wars and his expansion in Southern Europe.

Concerning the Ottoman period, early textbooks do not impose a clear negative attitude. Even a positive perspective is evident in some studies – for example, Ganchev asserts that the Bulgarians' wretchedness resulted from the decay of the state (the corruption of state institutions, the weakness of the army, the lack of order), not from the nature of the Ottoman Empire in general.³⁹ In comparison with later texts, the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s accounts are more sincere, straightforward and descriptive. They provide much more information and details, which are missing in later history textbooks. The narratives after 1944 are more conceptual, focused on a certain thesis which, however, requires filtering and even manipulation of the available information.

In the communist period there were about a half dozen books on Bulgarian history, which were edited and republished several times.⁴⁰ Textbooks in the communist period were few.⁴¹ The official doctrine for history did not change frequently; it was firm and stable.⁴² It is notable that the authors of two textbooks actually wrote concise, academic Bulgarian histories as well. Thus, keeping in mind that usually the books in question were authored by the same people, it is possible to claim that there was stability in the conception of the *kircali* time and the Ottoman rule as a whole. Moreover, texts written by the same authors are

(Sofia, 1945); Georgi Dikovski, L. Bliznev and G. Velev, *Otechestvena istoriya za IV otdelenie* [History for 4th Grade of Primary School] (Sofia, 1946).

³⁹ Ganchev, *Uchebnik*, 88.

⁴⁰ Dimitar Kosev, *Novaia istoria Bolgarii* [The New History of Bulgaria] (Moscow, 1952); Dimitar Angelov, Hristo Gandev and Ivan Snegarov, *Istoria na Balgaria* [History of Bulgaria], 2 vols. (Sofia, 1954) (second edition: Sofia, 1961); Dimitar Angelov, Bistra Tsvetkova and Krumka Sharova, *Kratka istoria na Balgaria* [Concise History of Bulgaria] (Sofia, 1958); Dimitar Angelov, Dimitar Kosev and Hristo Hristov, *Kratka istoria na Balgaria* [Concise History of Bulgaria] (second edition: Sofia, 1966); Alexander Fol, Vasil Guzelev, Nikolay Genchev and Konstantin Kosev, *Kratka istoria na Balgaria* [Concise History of Bulgaria] (Sofia, 1983). A comprehensive presentation of Bulgarian history was offered in the 1980s in a so-called multivolume academic history of Bulgaria. There the *kircali* time is portrayed in the fifth volume: *Istoria na Balgaria* [History of Bulgaria], vol. 5 (Sofia, 1985).

⁴¹ Dimitar Angelov, Dimitar Kosev and Hristo Hristov, *Uchebnik po istoria* [Textbook on History] (Sofia: Prosveta, 1973); Alexander Burmov, Dimitar Kosev and Hristo Hristov, *Uchebnik po istoria* [Textbook on History] (Sofia: Prosveta, 1976); Vasil Guzelev, Konstantin Kosev and Georgi Georgiev, *Uchebnik po istoria* [Textbook on History] (Sofia: Prosveta, 1987).

⁴² The watershed divides the late 1940s from the early 1950s, with two textbooks shaping the differences. In Bozhidar Bozhikov and Alexander Burmov, *Balgaska istoria za VII klas* [Bulgarian History for the 7th Grade] (Sofia, 1946) the communist doctrine had not yet been presented, but Bozhidar Bozhikov and Tsveta Undzhieva, *Balgaska istoria. Istoria za VII klas* [Bulgarian History: Textbook for the 7th Grade] (Sofia, 1955) already sets forth the main points of this ideology. An example is the idea of the bourgeois anti-feudal revolution, in which the driving forces were the peasants and craftsmen: Bozhikov, *Balgaska istoria*, 43. Isov, who examines the Bulgarian textbooks, also writes that in the 1950s the education system was 'completely drawn into the orbit of the communist doctrine'. See Isov, *Nai-razlichniat sassed*, 35.

virtually identical – slightly expanded or shortened, according to the given public, but with the main ideas and expressions unchanged. In addition, it is important to note that *certain* historians present the national Bulgarian doctrine, which means that they were officially authorized to establish the national ideology. Comparison of the texts shows that there is no particular rethinking, editing or changing of the viewpoint. The fact that these texts remained in use for such a long period of several decades reflects the political and ideological situation. The general position on the historical period in question was that it was a period of suffering for the Bulgarian nation, while all Muslims, the bandits as well as the corrupt Ottoman authorities, oppressed the Bulgarians.

The uniformity of concepts and stability of textbooks in the 1944-1989 era contrasts with the dynamics of the post-communist period in Bulgaria. In that period, numerous histories of Bulgaria have been issued and many scholars have offered their own texts on the national Bulgarian history. There are several projects which aim to revise the public perceptions of Bulgarian history and, particularly, to dispel the clichés of the communist discourse.⁴³ Those publications, however, are not ambitious projects which aim at a *rethinking* of the national history. They amass interpretations of currently prominent Bulgarian historians for the different historical periods. These texts are neither organized according to a common concept nor necessarily innovative. Therefore, in many cases historians' visions considerably contradict each other (see, below, the example regarding Mutafchieva's and Kosev's texts).

The major change in this period is the variety of standpoints, approaches and styles. The situation regarding textbooks also became highly variable and kaleidoscopic. In 1996 three alternative textbooks appeared,⁴⁴ and these were

⁴³ Ivan Lazarov, Plamen Pavlov, Ivan Tutundzhiev and Milko Palangurski, *Kratka istoria na balgarskia narod* [Concise History of the Bulgarian Nation] (Sofia: Prosveta 1993); Ivan Bozhilov, Vera Mutafchieva, Konstantin Kosev, Andrey Pantev and Stoycho Grancharov, *Istoria na Balgaria* [History of Bulgaria] (Sofia, 1993) (second edition: Sofia, 1998); Petar Angelov, Dimitar Sazdov and Ivan Stoianov, *Istoria na Balgaria 681- 1944* [History of Bulgaria 681-1944] (Sofia, 2003); Georgi Markov, ed., *Istoria na Balgaria* [History of Bulgaria], vol. 2 (Sofia: Trud, 2004); Blagovest Nyagulov, *Istoria na balgarite. Uchebnik za chuzhdestranni grazhdani, kansidatstvashiti v balgarski universiteti* [History of the Bulgarians: Textbook for Foreign Citizens Who Apply at the Bulgarian Universities] (Sofia, 2004); Tsvetana Georgieva and Nikolay Genchev, *Istoria na Balgaria* [History of Bulgaria] (Sofia, 1999) (second edition: Sofia, 2006).

⁴⁴ Alexander Fol, Ivan Andreev, Vera Mutafchieva, Rayna Gavrilova and Ivan Ilchev, *Istoria za 11 klas* [History for the 11th Grade] (Sofia, 1996); Petar Delev, Georgi Bakalov, Petar Angelov, Tsvetana Georgieva and Plamen Mitev, *Istoria za 11 klas* [History for the 11th Grade] (Sofia, 1996); Vasil Guzelev, Konstantin Kosev, Milcho Lalkov and Maria Radeva, *Istoria za 11 klas* [History for the 11th Grade] (Sofia, 1996).

replaced in 2000-2001⁴⁵ and again in 2007.⁴⁶ Prepared by different teams, these textbooks offer an opportunity for choice in the process of teaching history.

Thus, the two periods in question generated diverse attitudes towards history stemming from substantial differences in the political and social atmosphere. This emerges when analyzing particular historical accounts.

The Narrative

In the earlier textbooks, the historical context and the general picture of Sultan Selim III's rule (1789-1807) are accurately described. The narrative about the investigated period is composed of two main elements: the plunder perpetrated by the *kircalis* bands and the activity of one of the mighty separatists in the region, Osman Pazvantoğlu (1793-1807). For the authors the *kircali* period fits exactly into twelve years, while the later studies expand it to about twenty to thirty years.⁴⁷ It seems that the authors of the earlier textbooks had a precise time span in mind, or even some particular events, which they described as the *kircali* period.

The authors are also very accurate in depicting the bandits. They provide a list of terms used for them – *daalis*, *kesicis*, *kapasız* etc., and explain their inner organization and hierarchy. The composition of the bands is defined as multiethnic – not only Turks and Albanians but also Bulgarians, Bosnians and Tatars are mentioned.⁴⁸ The central authorities and state troops are portrayed as disorganized and powerless. Many authors claim that the janissaries became one of the main sources for enlarging the *kircalis* bands.

Usually the local people are not categorized according to ethnic origin but are called 'the population'. In some cases the cooperation between Turks and Bulgarians in defending the villages and cities is also mentioned. Only Dragan Manchov deviates from this common tendency by offering a clearly nationalistic discourse and separating Turks and Bulgarians by giving them specific roles of oppressors and oppressed. He first raises the idea that *only* Bulgarian *hayduks* resisted the Turkish *kircalis* bands, and those struggles actually helped the development of the Bulgarians' national emancipation movement by contributing

⁴⁵ Petar Delev, Georgi Bakalov, Petar Angelov, Tsvetana Georgieva and Plamen Mitev, *Istoria za 11 klas* [History for the 11th Grade] (Sofia, 1999) (second edition: Sofia, 2001); Vasil Guzelev, Dimitar Sazdov, Plamen Pavlov, Ivan Tutundzhiev and Milko Palangurski, *Istoria na Balgaria* [History of Bulgaria] (Sofia, 2000).

⁴⁶ Romyana Kusheva, Georgi Yakimov and Mihail Gruev, *Istoria i tsivilizatsia* [History and Civilization] (Sofia: Azbuki-Prosveta, 2007); Konstantin Kosev, Vaska Tankova, Ts. Kasnakova and Hristo Matanov, *Istoria i tsivilizatsia* [History and Civilization] (Sofia: Anubis, 2007); Rayna Gavrilova, Maria Radeva and Evgenia Kalinova, *Istoria i tsivilizatsia* [History and Civilization] (Sofia: Prosveta, 2007). The conception of the Ministry of Education has changed in recent years, and the period of Ottoman rule is now divided into two periods: the fifteenth to the seventeenth century and the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. These periods are presented in fifth- and sixth-grade textbooks, while the *kircali* time almost disappear.

⁴⁷ Ganchev, *Uchebnik*, 90.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

to its organization and military training.⁴⁹

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the discourse does not change substantially. The narration considers the organization of the *kircalis* bands, their ethnic composition (including mention of Greeks, Crimean Tatars and Gypsies) and the merging of state forces into the bands. The activities of the local governors receive a new emphasis; Nikola Stanev mentions Ali Pasha of Joannina (1782-1822) and Mehmed Ali (1805-1848) together with the above-noted Osman Pazvantoglu.⁵⁰ Thus, the composition of the social groups which contributed to the turmoil in the provinces became much more varied.⁵¹ Some details about the disorder and weakness of the state and the sultanic army are added in the 1940s, enhancing understanding of the period in question. Another line, however, is also elaborated: specific roles in the conflict are ascribed to certain ethnicities. As a result, the *kircalis* are presented mainly as Turks (only in some exceptional cases did Bulgarians and Albanians join the bands), while the victim of the anarchy is the 'unprotected' Bulgarian population.⁵²

The narrative about the *kircali* time in the communist period starts with description of the situation in the Bulgarian lands in the late eighteenth century. At that time the Ottoman Empire had been captured by 'anarchy',⁵³ 'feudal civil wars'⁵⁴ and 'decentralization',⁵⁵ which emerged as a result of 'corruption of the *timar* system'⁵⁶ or 'changes in the Ottoman society'.⁵⁷ As a consequence of this chaos, numerous bands arose in the Balkan provinces of the empire. They were composed of 'soldiers and janissaries',⁵⁸ 'discontented feudal lords, janissaries and other rebellious elements',⁵⁹ 'small failed feudal lords, janissaries and others'.⁶⁰ In most cases historians do not detect the involvement of Bulgarians in these *kircalis* bands⁶¹; the exceptions are the texts of Vera Mutafchieva and Dimitar Kosev.⁶²

The attempts at countering the *kircalis* threat are presented in various ways. Some accounts describe the central authorities' struggle with the bandits and highlight the weak control over the provinces as a reason for the lack of success. Interestingly, some studies portray the frictions between the administration in the

⁴⁹ Manchov, *Uchebnik*, 150.

⁵⁰ Stanev, *Balgarska i obshta istoria*, 71.

⁵¹ Kepov, *Obshta i balgarska istoriya*, 46-47.

⁵² Bozhikov, *Istoriya*, 89.

⁵³ Guzelev, *Uchebnik*, 1987, 122.

⁵⁴ Dimitar Angelov, *Kratka istoria*, 1958, 108; Guzelev, *Uchebnik*, 1987, 122.

⁵⁵ Fol, *Kratka istoria*, 1983, 151.

⁵⁶ Dimitar Kosev, *Kratka istoria*, 1966, 108-109.

⁵⁷ *Istoria na Balgaria*, 1985, 163.

⁵⁸ Dimitar Angelov, *Kratka istoria*, 1958, 108.

⁵⁹ Dimitar Kosev, *Kratka istoria*, 1966, 109.

⁶⁰ Burmov, *Uchebnik*, 1976, 126.

⁶¹ Vera Mutafchieva, *Kardzhaliisko vreme [Kircali Time]* (second edition: Sofia, 1993), 392-393.

⁶² Dimitar Kosev, *Novaia istoria*, 1952, 31; *Istoria na Balgaria*, 1985, 163.

centre and in the periphery as a cause for the failure of the governmental system.⁶³ Hardly mentioned is the cooperation between the central (Ottoman) authorities and the local population (mainly Christian) in the struggle against the anarchy, even gun-possession by non-Muslims having been accepted.⁶⁴ The widespread view is that the central authority was very weak and its control over the provinces insufficient. The general thesis is that the Sublime Porte was helpless before the *kircalis*.⁶⁵ Thus, the involvement of the Ottoman authorities in Balkan history in the period in question has been diminished. Some historians absolutely ignore the state officials' role,⁶⁶ claiming that the local population, i.e. Bulgarians,⁶⁷ overwhelmingly defeated the *kircalis* bands.⁶⁸ The phrases used are indicative of this standpoint: 'the Bulgarian population in the towns and villages organized the resistance against the aggressors...the Bulgarian population created an armed militia and...caused significant defeats of the invaders'.⁶⁹

The consequences of the three-decade clash affected mainly the local population. There the manipulation of the historical narrative is clearly evident and extremely strong. The inhabitants are diminished to the Bulgarian ethnic group. Thus, the controversy over the *kircalis* bands, composed of Muslims (i.e. Turks) according to the authors, is clearly visible. The terms 'reaya' and 'local population' used in the texts are definitely used as synonyms for 'Bulgarians'. Not a single book mentions the other ethnic groups which inhabited these lands such as Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Gypsies and so on. The Turkish population in the towns and villages is referred to only rarely.⁷⁰ Typical phrases which focus readers' attention on the Bulgarians' destiny are 'the huge sufferings of the Bulgarian nation'⁷¹ or 'the Bulgarians had been subjected to enormous plunder'.⁷² The most common expressions are 'Bulgarians'⁷³ and 'Bulgarian population'.⁷⁴ Very frequently these are replaced by 'Bulgarian nation' and 'the nation'.⁷⁵ Thus, clearly the emphasis is on the suffering of the Bulgarians. In addition, a notion has been created that the lands in this part of the Balkans and their population are in fact Bulgarian. This has been achieved by replacing the historically

⁶³ Dimitar Kosev, *Novaia istoria*, 33; *Istoria na Balgaria*, 1985, 164.

⁶⁴ Dimitar Kosev, *Novaia istoria*, 33; *Istoria na Balgaria*, 1985, 169-171; Mutafchieva, *Kardzhaliisko vreme*, 64, 89, 98.

⁶⁵ Dimitar Angelov, *Istoria*, 1961, 320.

⁶⁶ Burmov, *Uchebnik*, 1976, 126.

⁶⁷ Dimitar Angelov, *Istoria*, 1961, 321.

⁶⁸ This is defined as a 'heroic deed of the Bulgarians' in Angelov, *Istoria*, 1961, 322.

⁶⁹ Dimitar Angelov, *Kratka istoria*, 1958, 109.

⁷⁰ Dimitar Kosev, *Novaia istoria*, 33.

⁷¹ Burmov, *Uchebnik*, 1976, 126.

⁷² Fol, *Kratka istoria*, 1983, 151.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁷⁴ Dimitar Angelov, *Kratka istoria*, 1958, 109.

⁷⁵ Dimitar Angelov, *Istoria*, 1961, 322.

correct 'Balkan lands' or 'Ottoman provinces' with 'Bulgarian lands',⁷⁶ 'Bulgaria',⁷⁷ 'Bulgarian towns'⁷⁸ or 'Bulgarian settlements'.⁷⁹ This is a very successful approach because today's toponyms are permitted in historical works in order to avoid confusion and make texts more understandable. Hence, readers do not analyze these expressions and automatically start thinking and talking about the Bulgarian lands and the Bulgarian nation. It is typically nationalistic to claim that a certain region is populated only by one nation while excluding other ethnic groups.⁸⁰ Ignoring those groups makes them invisible.

The construction of a simple, explicit image of the Bulgarian nation also entails creating an opposite image – the Ottomans, in order to posit a strong and clear contrast. The group of the 'Turks' includes certain elements: state officials, local notables (*ayans*) and *kircalis*. Generally speaking, according to the texts in question, the Ottomans were the leaders and were connected with a certain social stratum – the governing class. Very rarely they are viewed as part of a common people. The texts do not emphasize such an entity because the main aim is to further develop the 'Bulgarians-Turks' dichotomy. That antithesis includes several levels burdened with certain pejorative meanings such as: 'subjects-rulers'; 'peaceful population-*kircalis* bands'. Moreover, the dichotomy 'Bulgarians-Turks' is equal for historians to the dichotomy 'Christians-Muslims'. Bulgarian historians go further; some claim that Bulgarians suffered coercion not only from the bandits but also from the Sultan's troops.⁸¹ In this way, various roles of the Ottomans are diminished to only one: the oppressors, no matter what sort of social position they occupied. Only textbooks written by Mutafchieva present a distinction between 'the Porte' and 'the central authorities', '*kircalis*' and '*ayans*' etc. In general, the historically correct term 'Ottomans' is replaced with 'Turks'. Thus, many allusions, not connected with the period in question, could be drawn by the readers.

It is apparent that the images that were created involve many misleading aspects: first, the determination of the ethnic origin of the local population; second, the composition of the *kircalis* bands which, according to the sources, had a mixed ethnic and religious structure; third, the nuances within the religious groups (the divisions between Orthodox and Catholics, Sunnis and Shiites), which meant they were not so monolithic; and fourth, the incorrect division between the Bulgarian

⁷⁶ Dimitar Kosev, *Novaia istoria*, 36; Dimitar Angelov, *Istoria*, 1961, 323; Dimitar Angelov, *Kratka istoria*, 1966, 109.

⁷⁷ Dimitar Kosev, *Novaia istoria*, 36; Dimitar Angelov, *Istoria*, 1961, 323; Burmov, *Uchebnik*, 1976, 126.

⁷⁸ Dimitar Angelov, *Kratka istoria*, 1966, 109.

⁷⁹ Burmov, *Uchebnik*, 1976, 126. Mutafchieva uses the historically correct phrases: 'Rumelia', 'the Balkan lands' and certain toponyms such as 'eastern Thrace' etc. See: *Istoria na Balgaria*, 1985, 167.

⁸⁰ I am aware that usage of the expression 'Bulgarian lands' could also result from the emphasis on the national Bulgarian history, which does not necessary mean the inevitable exclusion of the rest of the ethnic groups in the region.

⁸¹ Dimitar Angelov, *Kratka istoria*, 1966, 109.

and Ottoman societies.⁸² Historians try to impose a notion of the mutual existence of two societies each with its own autonomous development. They thereby emphasize the specifics of the Bulgarian one, which was influenced by European ideas rather than the interactions with the Ottoman social and political structure. It is interesting to observe not only the phenomenon of several overlapping opposite pairs and their merging into one, but also the fusion of ethnic, religious and social controversy into a single dichotomous pair: Bulgarians-Turks.

In the post-communist period the descriptions of the *kircali* time are much more modest and variable according to the individual viewpoints presented. Some historians choose not to emphasize the period; they hardly mention it or use it as a background for other historical events.⁸³ Others consider it a crucial moment in Bulgarian history. Both, however, assert the main characteristics of the *kircali* time. All historians agree with the definition of them as a period of chaos and anarchy;⁸⁴ turbulent times,⁸⁵ 'separatism and far-reaching banditry'.⁸⁶ The portrayals of the actors, however, are much more complicated. Special attention is given to the role of Bulgarians in the *kircali* time. It is emphasized that the Bulgarians participated on both sides of the barricade, supporting *kircalis*, *ayans* or the central authorities.⁸⁷ Mutafchieva stresses the mixed religious and ethnic character of the *kircalis* bands.⁸⁸ In support of this thesis, the names of the most famous Bulgarian bandits are noted.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the detected cooperation between local Bulgarians (Christians) and Pazvantoğlu is highlighted.⁹⁰ But the Bulgarians and Turks are also presented as peaceful citizens who together organized the defence of their own settlements and built fortifications against the bandits.⁹¹ One of the textbooks offers a special discussion of the role and position of Bulgarians in the events presented, which is named 'The Bulgarians and the Anarchy'.⁹² In most cases authors make a clear distinction between the *kircalis*,⁹³

⁸² Ibid., 171.

⁸³ Iliia Todev, 'Faktori na Vazrazhdaneto [Factors of the Revival],' in *Istoria na Balgaria*, vol. 2, ed. Georgi Markov (Sofia: Trud, 2004), 357-415; Tsvetana Georgieva, 'Balgarskite zemi prez XV-XVII vek' [Bulgarian Lands in the 15th-17th Centuries], in Delev, *Istoria*, 1996, 151-272; Ivan Tutundzhiev, 'Stopanski i sotsialni promeni v balgarskite zemi prez XVIII vek i zarazhdane na natsionalnoosvoboditelna ideologia – Paisii Hileendarski i Sofronii Vrachanski' [Economic and Social Changes in Bulgarian Lands in the 18th Century and the Formation of National-Liberation Ideology], in Lazarov, *Kratka istoria*, 1993, 124-131; Nyagulov, *Istoria*, 77-96.

⁸⁴ Ivan Bozhilov and others, *Istoria na Balgaria* [History of Bulgaria] (second edition: Sofia: Abagar, 1998), 174-175.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 188; Fol, *Istoria*, 1996, 179.

⁸⁶ Markov, *Istoria*, 2004, 365.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 366; Fol, *Istoria*, 1996, 179.

⁸⁸ Bozhilov, *Istoria*, 1998, 174.

⁸⁹ Markov, *Istoria*, 2004, 366.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 365; Fol, *Istoria*, 1996, 179.

⁹¹ Bozhilov, *Istoria*, 1998, 174.

⁹² Fol, *Istoria*, 1996, 179.

⁹³ Delev, *Istoria*, 1996, 194.

the local population⁹⁴ (also the Bulgarian population),⁹⁵ the central authorities (the Sultan,⁹⁶ the Sublime Porte)⁹⁷ and the local notables.⁹⁸ Christians and Muslims, Bulgarians and Turks are much more equally presented in the narrative than in the previous period.

It is also notable that some scholars outlined the changes in the Bulgarians' lives which resulted from the *kircali* time. They deny the absolutely negative evaluation, which is characteristic of the previous period, and emphasize some positive outcomes such as the growing self-confidence, the notion of controlling their own destiny, and the military experience which became crucial in the period of the national emancipation movement.⁹⁹

The stress on ethnically oriented history has been preserved as a general outlook. All historians write from this point of departure and for Bulgarians. Mutafchieva writes about 'our lands',¹⁰⁰ 'the *kircali* time [that] changed many things in Bulgarians' lives',¹⁰¹ about how 'the Bulgarians are faced with the choice'¹⁰² and so on. But within this common orientation many different positions can be discerned. Some of them place Bulgarian history in a wider, imperial or even civilizational context (Todev,¹⁰³ Georgieva);¹⁰⁴ others, such as Mutafchieva, present the period in a very detailed and complex manner because of their profound knowledge of it.

Some of the historians, however, preserve and reproduce old statements borrowed from the 1970s and 1980s. The most interesting and indicative contradiction is that between Mutafchieva's and Kosev's texts. A certain academic history contains chapters offering two completely different concepts of the *kircali* time. Whereas Mutafchieva presents the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, Kosev starts with the eighteenth and continues to the nineteenth century. Therefore, the period of the late eighteenth century overlaps in the two respective chapters.

Some other texts implicitly or explicitly present very dogmatic and tendentious viewpoints on the *kircali* time. In some cases they are sweetened with some clichés about the cohabitation of Muslims and Christians, but the main thrust of the text is the discrimination against Bulgarians under Ottoman rule and

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 195.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 194.

⁹⁹ Markov, *Istoria*, 2004, 366; Bozhilov, *Istoria*, 1998, 174; Georgieva, *Istoria*, 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Bozhilov, *Istoria*, 1998, 174.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 175.

¹⁰² Ibid., 175.

¹⁰³ Markov, *Istoria*, 2004, 360-365.

¹⁰⁴ Delev, *Istoria*, 1996, 188-190.

their physical annihilation.¹⁰⁵ In other cases, older viewpoints are much more evident (Kosev,¹⁰⁶ Sazdov,¹⁰⁷ and others).¹⁰⁸ These support the main idea about the disastrous results of the Ottoman invasion and of Ottoman rule in the Balkan lands in general. According to them, the terror in the *kircali* time was not only caused by the *kircalis* bands but also by the Ottoman authorities.

Comparison of textbooks and academic histories indicates a lack of clear distinction between the two types of historical texts. Actually, their theses and discourses are very similar, first, because of the common ideas about the analyzed periods, and second, because the same authors appear in both groups of studies. Differentiation is more quantitative: concepts, assertions and arguments are presented with much more detail in the academic histories than in the textbooks. The representation of the *kircali* time depends much more on authors' viewpoints, however, than on the type of book. The idea of periodically rethinking Bulgarian history is not necessarily fulfilled because many of the texts have had their second edition, which has been done without any revisions. Moreover, some of the leading authors have retained conservative views on Ottoman rule in the Bulgarian lands which have not been influenced by the transformation of the intellectual environment in the post-communist period. Other scholars only prove again their broadminded standpoints, shaped in the course of their previous work on the Ottoman Empire.

The Methods

The above discussion delineates the methods and techniques of manipulation of history used in the shaping of national historiography, which involve creating ideologically burdened images and stereotypes. First is the typical omission of pointing out the complicated nature of the actors; the groups dealt with in the provincial society had differing roles. For instance, some Bulgarians participated in *kircalis* bands, some supported Osman Pazvantoğlu against the central power, and others organized the defence of settlements together with the state authorities. A clear presentation of that complicated picture would make readers think about historical texts and ask questions about historical realities.

Second, the social roles in the society are presented in a very clear-cut fashion: rulers and ruled, oppressors and oppressed. The dichotomies of

¹⁰⁵ Nyagulov, *Istoria*, 77, 82, 86. The author supports the old thesis about the demographic collapse of the Bulgarian nation in the fifteenth century and the limitation of its evolution because of the backward character of the Ottoman regime: *ibid.*, 77, 78. Regarding the *kircali* time he points out the Ottoman authorities' repression of the Bulgarian population: *ibid.*, 91.

¹⁰⁶ Bozhilov, *Istoria*, 1993 (second edition: Sofia, 1998); Guzelev, *Istoria*, 1996. Even in a text issued in 2007, Konstantin Kosev did not change his position. Some sentences about 'countless sufferings' of Bulgarians and 'raging terror' are presented there: Konstantin Kosev, *Istoria i tsivilizatsia*, 2007, 31-32.

¹⁰⁷ Petar Angelov, *Istoria*, 2003, 455-457.

¹⁰⁸ Guzelev, *Istoria*, 2000; Lazarov, *Kratka istoria*, 1993, 124-125.

Muslims-Christians and Turks-Bulgarians are firmly attached to these. Thus, these dichotomies are equivalent and substitute for each other. As a result, ethnic and religious variations are omitted. Whole religious communities (Orthodox Christians) are represented by a single part of them (Bulgarians); others are not mentioned at all (Catholics, Alevis). According to the texts in question, there were only two ethnic groups – Bulgarians and Turks. Hence, several easily understandable dualities were created.

The case study illustrates the intention of the national historiographies to generate texts which interpret history as the story of a nation. That is why the case presented can be discussed in a broader perspective, pointing out the main characteristics and mechanisms of the nationalistic approach to history. One of the negative results of such interpretations is the elision of the multifaceted character of the historical picture; some of the main actors in history are missing, while others are presented as one-sided images. The narrative is reduced to the establishment of several dichotomous opposing pairs, which possess various characteristics but always retain their significance as the Good or the Evil. That is how the roles are clearly portrayed. This positing of black-and-white images assists the manipulation of history to produce appropriate public attitudes.

The interpretation of history as a firmly established truth is typical of texts of this kind. The texts avoid presenting controversial viewpoints and assessments about different historical questions, thereby trying to convince readers of the Truth. First, the simplification avoids discussion of controversial theses and establishes firm evaluations. The obscuring of details, of the multicoloured picture, and of controversies helps generate a facile and, hence, logical story. The characters in the story are also presented as monolithic images who could never do anything controversial.

A certain perception of history is promoted by subjective elements. Since the narratives present their own history, readers identify themselves with one of the given sides – naturally, the good one. The mechanism of 'We-the Others' dichotomies defines the roles and attributes of the opposing pairs. In this way the qualities of the images established are predetermined.

As a result of these manipulative techniques, history is presented in a clear and non-problematic mode which cannot be disputed or re-evaluated. Readers cannot actually discuss the theses and assessments that are offered because they lack a detailed picture of problems, questions and obscurities. The simplistic account is very convenient because it is easily understood, learned and reproduced. It precludes the possibility of formulating a personal evaluation of historical actors and events. Instead of particular standpoints, certain stereotypes are generated and disseminated in the society. These often have an emotionally coloured content that fosters their popularity. Moreover, these conventional images, derived from historical conditions, are easily and quickly applied to current situations.

* * *

To conclude, the analysis of the texts and some of their features as: lack of presentation of the historical processes, replaced by a monolithic image of the empire; manipulation of facts and creation of certain fixed images (stereotypes); and the dissemination of symbols, reveals that these national narratives come close to being literary texts. Moreover, if one continues analyzing the texts in this vein, he or she will discover that many fictional elements, such as metonyms and metaphors, are used, as well as the emotionally coloured phrases which are considered appropriate for these accounts. In the context of the narrative of the Ottoman past, it is possible to view the *kircali* time as a metonymy for the Ottoman period – a collective, conflated image; a part which symbolizes and replaces the whole. Consequently, a question about the general historical narratives in the relevant textbooks can be raised: how much are these based on historical data and examination and how much of their content is simply emotion?

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