

The Bulgarian book – historical routes and scientific directions

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In order to present the development of book history as a research field in Bulgaria, a brief review of the history of literary practices in the Bulgarian territories needs to be undertaken. I expressly emphasize “brief,” since the development of the Bulgarian manuscript and printed book has a long history of dates, facts, and names which do not easily lend themselves to a full description by a single specialist within a single article.

Historical overview

The earliest written testimonies in the Bulgarian lands were discovered in the strata of the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Bronze Ages (5900–1200 BCE).¹ A significant volume of epigraphic heritage was left on the Balkan Peninsula during the period of Antiquity by the Greeks, Thracians, and Romans (seventh century BCE–sixth century AD).² However, Bulgarian museums and libraries possess no books from this period. This is due both to the dynamic of historical processes in southeast Europe and to the climatic features of the region. Evidence of the creation and consolidation of a pagan Bulgarian state along the lower Danube River during the period between the seventh and ninth centuries can be found in the stone inscriptions of the Bulgarian khans.³ There are also a small number of

1 The way T. Stoichev “reads” the group of symbols in the Magura cave has its equivalent in the oral culture of Antiquity. The meaning of the record resembles the annual activities described in the form of an agricultural almanac in Hesiod’s poem “Works and Days.” Todor Stoychev, *Archaeoastronomy: Time-measuring prehistoric evidence in Bulgaria*. Sofia: Agato, 1998. Translator’s note: since the main goal of the article is to present the field of Bulgarian book history, the titles of all Bulgarian sources are translated into English rather than transliterated.

2 Theophil Ivanov, “Signatures of Ancient Writers, Artists, and Craftsmen (According to Inscriptions from Today’s Bulgaria),” in *Yearbook of the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski*, ISSN 1310-6090. 1 [1994], Suppl. 1, *Studia archaeologica* (2003): 199–204; Georgi Mihailov, *Classical Epigraphy*. Sofia: NBU, 2012; Kalin Stoev, *Being a Roman in Moesia. Anthroponomy and Prosopography of the Romanized Population in Upper and Lower Moesia (1st-3rd Century)*. Sofia: Tendril, 2017.

3 Veselin Beshevliev, *Proto-Bulgarian Inscriptions*. Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences [BAS], 1979.

historical documents written in the Proto-Bulgarian Runic alphabet.⁴ The traces of true literary culture in Bulgaria began to appear only in the third quarter of the ninth century with the country's adoption of Christianity during the reign of Boris Mikhail I (852–889). In the period between the ninth and fourteenth centuries, Bulgarian manuscript books blossomed under Tsar Simeon I the Great (893–927) and Tsar Ivan Alexander (1331–1371).⁵ The migration of various tribes across the Balkan Peninsula, the continuous geopolitical confrontation with the Eastern Roman Empire, and religious and scientific interest from bibliophiles in Western Europe in the period between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, led to the large-scale destruction of the rich Bulgarian medieval manuscript heritage, part of which is today preserved in the major libraries of Moscow, the Vatican, Vienna, London, and other cities.⁶ The economic, religious, and social crises of the tenth to twelfth centuries led to the development of the non-canonical, apocryphal literature that found expression in the spiritual influence of the Bogomils in Europe.⁷ The waning of the Bulgarian Tsardom and the rise of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the fourteenth century exacerbated the difficulties of preserving Bulgarian manuscript books and led to the late adoption of printing technology in southeast Europe.⁸ Although Slavonic Cyrillic prints connected with Bulgaria were produced from the beginning of the sixteenth century in Targovishte (Wallachia), Venice, and Brasov, the manuscript book remained the primary channel for information transfer until the first three decades of the nineteenth century.⁹ Even in the era of the Koenig steam press, Bulgarian literary scholars continued to make written transcripts, even of printed books. In Bulgaria, manuscript books continued to be produced, albeit heavily modified and de-evolved, until the middle

4 Veselin Beshevliev, *Proto-Bulgarian Epigraphic Documents*. Sofia: OF, 1981, 19–25.

5 Axinia Jurova, *One Thousand Years of Bulgarian Manuscript Books: Ornament and Miniature*. Sofia: Septemvri, 1981; *Notes of Bulgarian Book Scribes X–XVIII centuries*, vol. 1. Sofia: National Library St. Cyril and St. Methodius [NLCM], 2003.

6 The Bulgarian manuscript heritage of the First Bulgarian State (681–1018) is known from later Russian and Serbian copies: see K. Kuev, *The Fate of the Bulgarian Manuscript Book over the Centuries*. Sofia: Science and Art, 1986, 13–35. The Codex Suprasliensis is a representative sample of the dispersion of Bulgarian manuscript books: its three parts are in Ljubljana, Warsaw, and St. Petersburg. Accessed October 9, 2017 https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en/record/9200507/Reading_Europe_128060.html?q=bulgaria+manuscript.

7 Krastina Gecheva, *Bogomilianism and its Reflection in Medieval Christian Europe*. Sofia: Gutenberg, 2007.

8 Kuev, *Fate of the Bulgarian Manuscript*, 35–41.

9 *La Parole et L'image. Manuscrit, icônes et estampes du XVe au XXe siècle du Centre de Recherches Slavo-Byzantine "Ivan Dujčev" et de collections privées* (Sofia, 2004), Suppl. Cod. D. Slavo: 1–5, 9, 10, 12–18; Suppl. D. tril. 1; Priv. Panov: 3–7.

of the twentieth century. Indeed, the manuscript channel for the transfer of texts was to become a part of the practice of socialist *samizdat*.¹⁰ New Bulgarian printed books appeared only in 1806 and the intensity of the development of Bulgarian book printing, book publishing, and the book trade is borne out by the fact that in 1906 in Sofia – the capital of the young Bulgarian state (1878) – there were already rotary presses and equipment for mechanical typesetting.¹¹ In the first half of the twentieth century, the Bulgarian publishing industry was catching up after centuries of falling behind. Developments in the book field were reflected in the expansion of a large and well-balanced book market. Between 1944 and 1952, the liberal market system for book publishing and trading was replaced by a centralized planning model on Soviet lines. After 1989 and the fall of socialism, the Bulgarian book sector attempted to revert to free-market practices on the basis of trial and error. As can be seen from this brief overview, the Bulgarian book sector and related practices resemble an open range for the study of book history. Such historical stratification is also the reason why this academic and scientific area, although not fully realized as a single entity within itself, enjoys such great research interest in Bulgaria.

The book and researchers prior to the liberation of Bulgaria (1878)

The initial impulse to study the Bulgarian book emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century as a result of the academic and scientific interests of foreign philologists, *litterateurs*, and Slav historians including Pavel Shaffarik from Austria and Izmail Srenzevski and Yuriy Venelin, both from Russia. Similar to countries in Western Europe, prior to the emergence of detailed research, large collections of bibliographic information were amassed to support future studies of Bulgarian book history. The first Bulgarian bibliography was undertaken by Ivan Shopov, a student of Pavel Shaffarik. It was published in 1852 at a time when the new Bulgarian book had visible quantitative parameters.¹² Schaffarik's grandson, Konstantin Irechek, continued Shopov's work and in 1872, he published in Vienna *A Bibliography of the New Bulgarian Literature*, which

¹⁰ Unlike self-publishing, where only the figure of the publisher is absent and readers are hard to find, Socialist period samizdats were produced without printers, as they were handwritten, photo reproduced, cyclostyled, etc. Samizdats were disseminated without a bookstore network and their apocryphal nature makes them highly sought after by readers.

¹¹ Vasil Zagorov, *The Bulgarian Book (1878-1912): from the Revival Ideal to Commercialization*. Sofia: Za Bukvite – O Pismeneh, 2014.

covered the period up to 1870.¹³ Bibliographical research was also supported by the early advertising initiatives of the first serious Bulgarian *knizhar* (combined publisher and book trader) Hristo Danov, who in the 1860s began to publish catalogues for the needs of his book trade.¹⁴ They also contain extremely useful information about Danov's business practices, sales contacts, and book distribution network which extended through twenty-nine towns and cities within and around the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵ Such early interest led to the development of a detailed bibliography of the literature of the Bulgarian Revival and allowed for the rapid development of historical literary studies.

A great contribution to the development of Bulgarian archives, codicology, and paleography (in their role as auxiliary historical disciplines) and to bibliography in the 1870s was made by the Bulgarian Literary Society in Braila, Romania. This was a public association of intellectuals, which in 1911 was transformed into the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS). A leading theme of its printed publication, *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society*, was the historical and contemporary development of the Bulgarian book. In addition to the Scientific Section for the study of linguistic, historical, and other matters, a Critical Section was established with the aim of publishing "bibliographical reports, reviews, and criticisms of any new works of Bulgarian literature."¹⁶ Prior to the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878, the journal published accounts of a number of historical figures, valuable documentary sources for Bulgarian history and language, and manuscript books.¹⁷ Marin Drinov was to become established as a leading figure in the society for his research into the history, language, alphabet, and literature of the Bulgarians.¹⁸

12 Ivan Shopov, *List of Bulgarian Books Which Have Been Published to date*. Tsaregrad [Istanbul]: in typography Ts. newspaper, 1852.

13 Konstantin Iricek, *A Bibliography of the New Bulgarian Literature 1806-1870*. Braila, Vienna: The Bulgarian Literary Society, 1872.

14 Hristo Danov, *The List of Books Found for Sale in the Bookshop of Hr. Danov and the Association in Plovdiv*, Hr. G. Danov and his Association, 1862 (in Vienna): in the book printing works of L. Somer; Hristo Danov, *The List of Books for Sale at the Book Shop of Hr. Danov and Association in Plovdiv*. Tsarigrad - Vesir Khan: In the printing house of A. Minassian et al., 1866. See http://bgbookhistory.blogspot.bg/2017/12/blog-post_23.html, accessed June 5, 2018.

15 *Ibidem*, 1866. IV.

16 *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society*, I (1870): 1, 8.

17 *Periodical Journal ...* NLCM, accessed October 19, 2017, website [Link](#).

18 Marin Drinov, *Encyclopaedia of the Bulgarian Book*. Sofia: Pensoft, 2005, 150.

The first studies related to book history do not differ in terms of themes or methodology from similar nineteenth-century Western models. They concentrate mainly on studying famous scribes, printers, and publishers¹⁹ and important examples of literary culture.²⁰ There is a sense of the significant influence of historical romanticism, albeit subordinated to national Bulgarian ideology. The exposition is strictly chronological and precisely factual and descriptive, and there is a lack of analysis.²¹ The first studies served mainly to restore the national self-awareness and self-esteem of the Bulgarian people, which explains their scope, methodology, and results. Their aim was to popularize glorious moments from the historical past of medieval Bulgaria and to oppose and resolve the historical claims of the neighboring newly emerged Balkan nations, Romania, Greece, and Serbia. In this sense, the paleographic and codicological data collected by the first Bulgarian historians serve only as evidential material in long and what now seem academically sterile disputes over the greatness of the Balkan peoples. Another major theme in the study of the Bulgarian manuscript and old-printed book is that of language, imposed by the need for a standardized alphabet and rules for a common Bulgarian literary language.

The beginning of institutional book science in Bulgaria (1878–1946)

After the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878, the main guidelines and principles in the Revival period for the study of the Bulgarian manuscript and printed book were maintained. However, there was a change in scale in accordance with the developing institutions of the nascent state. In April 1878, a public library was established in Sofia, which was renamed the National Library on June 5, 1879, at the initiative of Marin Drinov.²² The institution's remit was to collect, undertake bibliographical classification of, and preserve Bulgaria's literary and documentary heritage. During the same period, the Bulgarian Literary Society also moved to the capital city. 1881 saw the foundation of

19 Marin Drinov, "Father Paisius. His time, his story, and his pupils," *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society*, I.4 (1871): 3–25; "Stoyko Vladislavov Sofronius," *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society*, I, nos. 5–6 (1872): 3–102.

20 "Neophyte Bozveli, Mati Bolgaria," *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society*, I, nos. 9–10, (1874): 1–40.

21 Henri-Jean Martin, "History of the Book and Bibliology," in *The History of the Book; The Book in History*. Sofia: Univ. ed. St. Kliment Ohridski, 2001, 119–43.

22 *The Bulgarian National Library and its Directors*. Sofia: Hristo Botev, 2009, 9.

the State Printing House which, in addition to its practical functions, was responsible for training specialists in polygraphy. In 1888 the first university in Bulgaria was established. It was named the “Higher Pedagogical Course,” and became a natural center for the development of Bulgarian historiography and philology. In parallel with the establishment of these institutions, a modest market for antiquarian books also emerged. This further enhanced public interest in Bulgarian antiquities – both manuscript and printed books.²³

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, all these prerequisites laid the ground for a new research field, the specific parameters of which brought it closer to the contemporary concept of book history. At this stage, of course, it was referred to as a specific method, rather than as a separate academic field, especially since philology and the history of Bulgarian Revival literature in this period were the dominant academic fields in the history of national book heritage. The understandings of Bulgarian academics from this period are described in the introduction to an article by Marin Ivanov, “The Palaeographic, Grammatical, and Critical Characteristics of the Pirdop Apostle”: “It goes without saying that the search for and academic study of these written monuments (manuscripts – author’s note) is aimed at explaining the historical development of the new Bulgarian language, on the one hand, and enriching our knowledge of the older literature, on the other.”²⁴ However, he admits that this type of research cannot be carried out without the help of works of a “bibliographic nature.”

After the Liberation, academics researching Bulgarian history found much greater opportunities for its public expression. In 1882, the *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society* was revived in Sofia and from 1889 the *Collection of Folklore, Science and Literature (CFSL)* began to be published under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education.²⁵ An exceptional example of the study of the Bulgarian manuscript book is an article by Peter Gudev which describes the Balkan expeditions of Lord Curzon

23 The private collection of Todor Plochev is significant for the scale of this activity. See Angela Cannon, *The Bulgarian Collections at the Library of Congress*, accessed December 16, 2017 <https://www.loc.gov/r/european/coll/bul.html>.

24 Marin Ivanov, “Paleographic, Grammatical and Critical Characteristics of the Pirdop Apostle,” *CHVHK (CFSL)* VI (1891): 83.

25 *CFSL*, NALIS Repository: accessed October 23, 2017, <http://digilib.nalis.bg/xmlui/handle/nls/25126/browse?type=dateissued>.

and the removal of the Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander (1356) to London.²⁶ Gudev provides a serious analysis of the physical medium, the text (including the marginalia) and illustrations, presenting parts of the manuscript in phototype.²⁷ His research goes beyond philology, paleography, and codicology, presenting a broader view not only of the essence of the fourteenth-century Bulgarian manuscript, but also the historical progression of book heritage through time and space. Over the years, the study of Bulgarian manuscript culture consolidated its place within the pages of the *CFSL*. A number of Bulgarian scholars including Lyubomir Miletich, Stoyan Argirov, and Nikola Nachov wrote on the subject. Their articles hint at a connection between Bulgarian academia and foreign research. The influence of the *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, published by Vatoslav Yagic, can be felt in particular.

Studies of the printed book are prevalent in Bulgarian academia in the 1880s and 1890s as part of the study of the Bulgarian Revival and the consolidation of the conceptual sustainability of the nation state. The oppositional nature of the historical narratives of the Balkan Peninsula should not be overlooked. Until the mid-1940s there was strong rivalry for the reallocation of the European territorial heritage of the Ottoman Empire. The research agenda was reiterated by Drinov, whose article “The First Bulgarian Printing Press in Thessaloniki and some of the books printed there” encouraged the Bulgarian academic community to engage in further study of Bulgarian printing prior to the Liberation.²⁸ In addition to the subsequent publication of a series of articles, the analysis by Drinov, which compares the publications of Theodosius of Sina in Thessaloniki and the Samokov publications by Nikola Karastoyanov, encouraged the historian Vassil Zlatarski to undertake a study of the book printing and retail business of the Karastoyanov family.²⁹ Nikola Karastoyanov was not only a teacher, but an impressive master of woodcuts and a speculative printer and book trader who has proved

26 Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander, Turnovo, 1355–1356, British Library Add. MS 39627.

27 Peter Gudev, “Bulgarian manuscripts in Lord Zouche’s library,” *CFSL*, VII (1892): 159–223; *CFSL*, VIII (1893): 137–68.

28 Marin Drinov, “The First Bulgarian Printing Works in Thessaloniki and Some of the Books Printed There,” *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society*, no. 31 (1889): 1–25.

29 V. Zlatarski, “Daskal Nikolay Karastoyanovich and his Printing House,” *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society* 9–10 (1905): 623–661; “On the History of the Samokov Printing House,” *Periodical Journal of the Bulgarian Literary Society* 5–6 (1907), 458–464.

of long-term interest to the Bulgarian academic community.³⁰ His resourcefulness in combining printing equipment with the screw printing press during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, his efforts to maneuver between the administrative and religious authorities in the Ottoman Empire and its neighboring countries, the transfer of his craft to his sons, and the active work of the printing company until the end of the nineteenth century provide a rich source of material not only for the history of the Bulgarian book, but also, using the principle of comparative studies, for the development of early Western European printing during the period of the screw press.

Drinov's correspondence also highlights Nikola Nachov's significance as a historian of the printed book in Bulgaria. Alongside his contribution to bibliographical studies of the Bulgarian book and the study of remarkable representatives of the book business during the Bulgarian Revival, such as Hadji Naiden Iovanovich from Tatar Pazardzhik, Nachov also completed the first major book-length study of Bulgarian book history, *The New Bulgarian Book and the Printing Press in Our Lands from 1806 to 1878*.³¹ His work is factually detailed and draws on published memories of eyewitnesses, interviews with living witnesses of past events, and archival documents. The second part of the study is geographically structured and emphasizes the importance of various European cities in the development of Bulgarian pre-Liberation book publishing. Appendices contain detailed bibliometric tables and graphs presenting quantitative and chronological details of book production. They relate to the individual publishing centers in particular and to the period in general terms.³²

The professional community in the arena of book publishing, book printing, and book trade has also made a significant contribution to the development of book history in Bulgaria. The first steps in this regard were made by associates of the greatest Bulgarian publishing house of the time, founded by Hristo G. Danov in 1855. On the occasion of its

30 It is impossible to list all the publications written about the Karastoyanov family. Nikola Karastoyanov's screw press was bought in 1911 by the State and together with some of the stereotypes and the printing equipment is today kept in the Historical Museum in the town of Samokov.

31 His research was presented to the Historical Philological Branch of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on June 19, 1919 and printed in 1921: Nikola Nachov, *The New Bulgarian Book and the Printing Press in Our Lands from 1806 to 1878*. Sofia: Grafika A.D., 1921. Available on: http://bgbookhistory.blogspot.bg/p/blog-page_6.html, accessed June 5, 2018.

32 *Ibid.*, 24, 25.

50th anniversary in 1905, a biographical account of the publisher written by Serafim Barutchiiski was brought out. In addition to many facts, the work contained a full bibliographic inventory of the publishing house's output over a period of fifty years, reviews of Danov's work in the periodical press, and numerous greetings, diplomas, and telegrams which give a clear idea of his public significance.³³ A detailed overview of the printing houses in Bulgaria in 1910 was undertaken by M. Benmaier. As secretary of the Typographical Workers' Union and branch representative, he closely followed the corporate history and details of the property, technical equipment, and personnel of all the printing houses throughout the country during the post-Liberation period.³⁴

Professional typography courses for printers held from 1913 onward in the State Printing House Works played an important role in the development of the history of the book in Bulgaria. The directors of the State printing works, Bozhil Rainov, Stilian Kutinchev, and Alexander Macedonski played important roles in developing these courses despite the long war period of 1912–18, launching them after the end of the First World War. The courses become the basis for the modern-day National Professional School of Graphic Arts and Photography in Sofia.

Stilian Kutinchev was the first Bulgarian researcher to systematically study the history of the book. As Chief Inspector of Labor (1908–18) he examined working conditions in the field of book printing and realized the need to improve the professional qualifications of printers. The earliest methodical article published in 1913 is today known only from bibliographical sources: "In the history of printing there is as much to be learnt as there is in any other history of literature, culture, or the great human discoveries in the domains of science, technology, and life. This history must be known by every intelligent person."³⁵ Kutinchev's chronological, geographic, and thematic research on the history of the book for the classroom were set out in the first Bulgarian

33 Danov was subsequently honored in a series of studies, but due to lack of space, only the second supplementary edition of Barutchiiski is quoted: *Hristo G. Danov: 1855-1905*. 2. supplemented ed.. Plovdiv: Jubilee edition, 1905. 262, 179–260, LXII.

34 M. Benmaier, "Typographic Production in Bulgaria," *Magazine of the Bulgarian Economic Society* XIV. 3 (1910): 230–54.

35 Stilian Kutinchev, "The History of Printing as a Study Subject" (From a lecture given at the opening of the typographic course at the State printing works in Sofia), *Bulgarian Printer* XII. 9 (1913).

school textbook on the history of the book – *Writing and Book Printing*.³⁶ It focuses on book printing, but also includes the history of writing systems and the history of the manuscript book. The question of the sources used in his work is interesting. The most influential source for Kutinchev’s lectures is Fedor Bulgakov’s *Russian Illustrated History of Literature and Typographic Studies* (1889), which according to Bulgakov himself is based on Karl Faulmann’s German *Illustrierte Geschichte der Schrift* (1880) and *Illustrierte Geschichte der Buchdruckerkunst* (1882), as well as French sources, the most significant of which is the *Histoire de l’Imprimerie* (1852) by Lacroix, Fournier, and Seré, also quoted in the Bulgarian edition. Kutinchev’s role as director of the State Printing House allowed him to order high-quality replicas of foreign illustrations and to visualize the main processes in the development of book history. He also carried out a comparative analysis of foreign processes in the field of book history with those taking place in the broad geographic zone of Bulgarian literary culture. The sources used led to the formation of a geographic triad which was to become a constant reference in Bulgarian lecture courses on the history of the book: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and Bulgaria.

As a major empirical source of academic research, Bulgarian bibliography continued to develop after the Liberation. Alexander Teodorov-Balan played a leading role in this respect. In addition to his famous retrospective bibliographical work *Bulgarian Bibliography Over One Hundred Years 1806-1905*,³⁷ he wrote a detailed overview of the history of Bulgarian bibliography, “The Bibliographical Work of the Bulgarians.”³⁸ He also published the first Bulgarian bibliographic journal *Knigopisets* (1904)³⁹ and was one of the founders of the Bulgarian Bibliographic Institute (BBI, 1918). The body’s organization chart stipulated that *Knigopisets (Scriber)* would be published as the official journal of the BBI and that “the journal will illuminate the book

36 Stilian Kutinchev, *Writing and Book Printing: The Origin and Development of Book Printing Technology*. Sofia: State Printing Works, 1920.

37 Alexander Teodorov-Balan, *Bulgarian Bibliography Over One Hundred Years 1806-1905*. Sofia: Bulgarian Literary Society, 1909. In 1911 Nikola Nachov added to and Valery Pogorelov restructured the bibliography for the period 1806–77: *Inventory of Old Printed Bulgarian Books: 1802-1877*. Sofia: National Library, 1923, VI.

38 Alexander Teodorov-Balan, “The Bibliographical Work of the Bulgarians,” in *Yearbook of Sofia University 1905-1906* (1906), 142–208.

39 *Knigopisets: A Monthly Magazine for Literary Thought and Work*. 1, no. 1 (1904) – (1920) Sofia, 1904–1920.

and words relating to book history, book manufacturers, and those in service, and will facilitate literary communication between the educated society in Bulgaria and abroad.”⁴⁰ In 1941 the institute's work was set out in law and its activity was supported by a donation made by Dr. Tsvetana D. Rasheva.⁴¹ In the 1930s and 1940s, due to his role at the BBI, Todor Borov became established as a leading figure in the field of book studies. He wrote a number of papers on bibliography and, with his influence and knowledge, laid the foundations for the academic transition between the monarchical and the socialist period. In the second half of the twentieth century, he laid the groundwork for the recruitment of expert personnel in the fields of librarianship, bibliography, and book history.⁴²

Annie Gergova summarizes the achievements in book studies between 1878 and 1944 and considers that they progress from a syncretic notion combining literature, philology, criticism, bibliography, and history, to the individual specificities and needs of the literary professions – publisher, printer, book retailer, and librarian.⁴³ In addition to practical guides to each profession, emphasis was also given to the broad study of historical processes. An example is *A Brief History of Libraries*⁴⁴ by Vasil Klassanov, which he published while at the same time launching a series of periodical publications to support the theoretical training of librarians, *Library Thought* (1926) and the journal *Librarian* (1938).

Socialism and book publishing in Bulgaria (1944–89)

After the coup of September 9, 1944, Bulgaria became a People's Republic (1946) in line with the Soviet model. The political processes led to profound changes in the book publishing system and the transformation from market economy principles to those of a planned economy. Between 1944 and 1952, private publishers, printing houses, and bookstores were nationalized, and Glavlit (1950), a centralized administrative structure,

40 Statutes of the Bulgarian Bibliographical Institute in Sofia (Sofia: BBI, 1918).

41 Law and Statutes of the Bulgarian Bibliographical Institute (Sofia: BBI, 1941).

42 “During the period up to September 9, 1944: “The Bulgarian Book”. Sofia: Pridvorna Pechatnica, 1935; “Why we need a Bulgarian bibliographic institute”. Sofia: BBI, 1941; “Books, Libraries, Bibliography”. Sofia: Bulgarian Thought, 1941; “The Road to Books: Introduction to Bibliography”. Sofia: BBI, 1942.

43 Annie Gergova, *Book Studies in Bulgaria*. Sofia: Science and Art, 1987, 79.

44 Vasil Klassanov, *A Brief History of Libraries*. Shumen: P. Penev, 1937.

was established.⁴⁵ It controlled the small number of thematically profiled State publishing houses and implemented the new regime's censorship policy.⁴⁶ Prohibitory and advisory indexes were published, which, in addition to controlled circulation in which volumes of printed books were deliberately under- or overstated, shaped reader tastes and habits.⁴⁷ These conditions led to a radical alteration of the paradigm for Bulgarian book science, which became synchronized with the theoretical and methodological constructions prevalent in the Soviet sphere. They also led to the adoption of a general science of book studies: "Knigoznanie", similar to French bibliology. This discipline brought together five major fields: book publishing, book printing, book trade, librarianship, and bibliography. These overlapping areas were examined from three temporal points of view: the past history of the book, present literary practice, and future literary theory.⁴⁸ Emphasis was placed on the printed book, thus creating an invisible demarcation line between book historians and codicologists, which can still be felt today in Bulgarian academia. The sustainability of this academic platform can be seen in the present structure of BA degree curricula designed to train librarians and publishers in Bulgaria and the fact that Soviet Union and later Russian works in the field of book studies are still being translated, read, and quoted.⁴⁹ One of the positive effects of the Soviet model was the adoption of Imperial Russian book science, which was rehabilitated by Soviet book science in the 1970s.⁵⁰ The similarities between Russian Book Studies (Knigovednie) and French bibliology also lead to closer contacts between the Bulgarian and French scientific schools.⁵¹

State patronage of book science during socialism led to the introduction of the history of the book into the curricula of Bulgarian secondary schools, colleges, and

45 Glavlit: General Directorate of Publishing, Polygraphic Industry, and Trade of Printed Production.

46 Vesela Chichovska, "Glavlit (1952-1956). Building a Unified Censorship System in Bulgaria," *Historical Review* 10 (1991): 38–69.

47 *List of Fascist Literature Subject to Seizure* (Sofia, 1945); Tsenko Tsvetanov, *What Should We Read?: Recommended Bibliography of Artistic Literature for Young People*. Sofia: Narodna Mladezh, 1954.

48 Annie Gergova, *Knigoznanie (Book Studies)*. Sofia, 1995, 22.

49 Alisa Belovitskaya, *Knigoznanie (Book Studies): General Book Studies*. Sofia: Za Bukvite – O Pismeneh, 2009.

50 In Bulgaria prominent representatives of the Soviet academic school are often cited, including N. Lisovski, Al. Lovyagin, N. Rubakin.

51 Annie Gergova, "Bulgarian-French Relations in the Field of Bibliology. Library Collaboration – Present and Future. Reports from the XIIIth Annual Conference of Union of Library and IT workers," accessed December 14, 2017, <http://www.lib.bg/dokladi2003/gergova.htm>.

universities for training librarians, publishers, printers, and book distributors.⁵² During the third quarter of the twentieth century, Maniu Stoyanov and Marin Vassilev published their own courses in book science. The courses had strong historical content influenced by the leading Soviet book researchers but were also based on the Bulgarian studies into the history of the book by Marin Drinov, Nikola Nachov, Stilian Kutinchev, and others.⁵³

The provision of State funds for the gradual restoration and modernization of the National Library in Sofia and the integration of the BBI into its structures transformed it into a leading national center for research into book history; something which has been preserved until the present day. Along with the research into manuscript, early printed, and old printed Bulgarian books, the center established a long-term strategy for the registration of Bulgarian book production. A great contribution to this was made by Todor Borov, director of the library until 1949 and the BBI until its closure in 1964.⁵⁴ Further stimulus to historical book research was provided by the creation of an analytical repertoire of Bulgarian Revival literature for the period 1806–77, compiled by Maniu Stoyanov,⁵⁵ the publication of an annotated bibliography of Bulgarian periodical publications between 1844 and 1944 by Dimitar Ivanchev,⁵⁶ and the start of work on a Bulgarian retrospective bibliography for the period 1878–1944.⁵⁷ Prior to 1989, professional state-financed periodical publications relating to libraries also played a role in the development of book history in Bulgaria. During the period between 1948 and 1963, nine volumes of the *BBI Yearbook* were published. *National Libraries News* has been published since 1952 and *Librarian* magazine, now *Library*, was first published in 1954. The work of several generations of researchers can be tracked in these periodicals.

52 The BBI (integrated into the National Library in Sofia, Bulgaria), Sofia University, National Academy of Arts, and the University of Library Studies and Information Technology (ex-State Librarian Institute) all became centers for teaching and research on the history of the book.

53 Maniu Stoyanov, *Knigoznanie (Book Studies): Lectures Given to the Autumn Course for Librarians, 1949*. Sofia: BBI, 1949; M. Vasilev, *Book History and Technology*. Sofia: Science and Art, 1955; *General and Applied Book Studies*. Sofia: Science and Art, 1963.

54 Todor Borov, *Encyclopedia of the Bulgarian Book*. Sofia: Pensoft, 2004, 84.

55 Maniu Stoyanov, *Bulgarian Revival Literature: Analytical Repertoire of Bulgarian Books and Periodicals. 1806-1878*. Sofia: Science and Art, 1957-1959, 2 vols.

56 Dimitar Ivanchev, *Bulgarian Periodical Press 1844-1944: Annotated Bibliographical Index*. Sofia: Science and Art, 1962–69, 3 vols.

57 *Bulgarian Books 1878-1944: Bibliographical Index*. Sofia: NLCM, 1978-2012, vols. 1–10.

The imposition of socialist concepts had a lasting impact on book history studies in Bulgaria. These can be seen in two main areas: the rejection of the commercial character of book publishing processes and the long-term focus on left-wing authors, publishers, printers, and booksellers. The former overlaps the romantic understanding of the non-commercial aims of Bulgarian book publishers prevalent in the national Revival period up to 1944, while the latter is based on the fact that the founders of socialism in Bulgaria, Georgi Kirkov, Dimitar Blagoev, Georgi Bakalov, and Georgi Dimitrov were themselves printers and book publishers. Despite these general trends, the research legacy can be seen in a new generation of researchers active in the book history of Bulgarian manuscript and printed books, including such names as Maniu Stoyanov, Bozhidar Raykov, Ivan Bogdanov, Vasil Yonchev, and Annie Gergova.⁵⁸ Their works on the history of the Bulgarian book re-examine the chronological, territorial, and thematic limitations of academic studies and contribute to establishing current terminological apparatus and research methodologies.

Bulgarian book history in the years of political transition (1989–2017)

A particular contribution to book history in Bulgaria was made by Annie Gergova, who, as a lecturer and researcher in the 1980s and 1990s, laid the foundations for the transition of Bulgarian book studies away from the theoretical frameworks and constraints imposed during the era of socialism. Of special significance is her historical and methodological work *Book Studies in Bulgaria (Knigoznanieto vs. Bulgaria)*, which in terms of attention to factual detail relating to the period prior to 1987 far exceeds this presentation of the research field imposed by space limitations.⁵⁹ She published the first post-socialist lecture course in book studies, reflecting the achievements of book history beyond the Iron Curtain.⁶⁰ In 2004, she oversaw publication of the *Encyclopedia* entry “The Bulgarian Book,” which focused on historical processes in the development of the Bulgarian book.⁶¹ Her unifying role is commemorated in the two Festschrift publications in her honor. These publications present the best of Bulgarian book studies as a whole and book history

58 The review of their work could form a separate study. A bibliographic reference is available, accessed December 14, 2017, <http://www.bg.cobiss.net/>.

59 Of particular value for this topic is Chapter V, “Historical Studies of the Bulgarian Book”, in Annie Gergova, *Book Studies in Bulgaria*. Sofia: Science and Art, 1987, 112–39.

60 Annie Gergova, *Book Studies*. Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski, 1995.

61 “Bulgarian Book,” in *Encyclopedia*. Sofia: Pensoft, 2004.

in particular, as well as a bibliography of her academic output.⁶² Gergova contributed to the training and academic development of a new generation of researchers in book history. Important work in this area was undertaken by Krasimira Daskalova, whose research helped to open up Bulgarian book history to the Western world. In 1994 she interviewed Robert Darnton,⁶³ and in 1995, her article, “Book History – Problems and Perspectives,” provided an overview of the French, English, American, and German fields.⁶⁴ The scientific collaboration between Gergova and Daskalova led to the publication in 2001 of Bulgaria’s first translated collection of key book history texts by Robert Darnton, Donald McKenzie, John Feather, G. Thomas Tanselle, David Hall, Henri-Jean Martin, Roger Chartier, and others.⁶⁵ These texts gradually began to break down the academic dogma that the Bulgarian book was not part of a commercial circuit. The development of the book business in Bulgaria further enhanced academic interest in the topic. In this respect, the collections of papers from the academic seminar on book publishing organized by the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University are of particular significance. They bring together theorists, practitioners, and historians working on print media.⁶⁶ Over the past two decades, a number of articles and monographs have been written about the historical aspects of the book business in Bulgaria.⁶⁷

The dynamics of the academic field are reflected in attempts to open the Bulgarian academic community to the research community outside the country, as well as the activities taking place in Bulgaria.⁶⁸ Recent years have marked many anniversaries

62 *Book History – A Way of Life: Collection in honor of Prof. Doctor of Philological Science Annie Gergova*. Sofia: LIK [Literature, Art, Culture], 2002; *Annie Gergova – A Life with Literary Passions: Collection in honor of her 75th birthday*. Sofia: University Publishers, 2012.

63 Robert Darnton, “Book History, The State of Play: Interview with Krasimira Daskalova,” *Studia culturologica* 3 (1994), 187–192.

64 Krasimira Daskalova, “Book History: Problems and Perspectives,” in *Yearbook of the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski Center for Cultural Studies* 87 [for 1994] (1999), 117–130.

65 *The History of the Book; The Book in History*. Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski, 2001.

66 *The Business Environment of the Book*, ed. Albert Benbasat et al. Sofia: University Publishers, 2007; *The Book in the Virtual World*. Sofia: University Publishers, 2012; *Book Publishing During a Crisis*. Sofia: University Publishers, 2016.

67 Albert Benbasat, *Banknotes and Dreams Between the Covers*. Sofia: Ciela, 2011; Vasil Zagorov, “Tarzan – the Story of a Bestseller,” in Gergova – *A Life With...*, 208–218; “From the History of Copyright in Bulgaria,” *Library* 1 (2013): 25–34.

68 Vasil Zagorov, “Lost in Translation or Lost in Publishing: Introduction of World Literature in Early Modern Bulgarian Publishing via Russian Language Editions,” *Pub Res Q* 33 (2017): 160, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12109-017-9508-5>

and celebrations of Bulgarian historical figures connected with books and researchers who became established in the latter half of the twentieth century. An anthology of historical studies of the Bulgarian book has been published.⁶⁹ New trends such as the history of reading, the use of geographic information systems, and digitization have also found their place in Bulgarian research publications.⁷⁰ Albert Benbasat's work *The False Science of the Book* has made an important contribution to debate in the research field. He opposes what he calls "Google science" or academic work based on copy-paste internet practices.⁷¹ Evidence of book history's ongoing recognition as an academic discipline is its presence on the curricula of humanities courses for librarians, archivists, and book publishers in the leading Bulgarian universities, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, the University of Library Science and Information Technologies (ULSIT), Veliko Tarnovo University St. Cyril and St. Methodius, and the New Bulgarian University.

Since 1989, work has continued on reference information supply for use in book research. In addition to the publication by the National Library of St. Cyril and St. Methodius of retrospective bibliography printed indexes, ULSIT has been involved in a project to create an information retrieval system which will provide analytical online bibliographic information about Bulgarian Revival books (1801–78).⁷²

From the above, it can be clearly seen that the development of Bulgarian historical book studies follows the main global trends. It has its own road map as described above but, at the same time, it is subject to various internal contradictions imposed by experience and certain theoretical notions accumulated at various stages of its development. The disputes surrounding the demarcation lines between the manuscript and the printed book, the literary-critical, philological, bibliographic, and historical approach, apologetics and the debunking of literary realities from the period of the

69 Vasil Zagorov and Albert Benbasat, eds, *Book, Literature, Book Publishing*. Sofia: Za Bukvite – O Pismeneh, 2016.

70 Alexander Kiosev, *Arguments About Reading*. Sofia: Ciela, 2013; P. Mukanova, M. Encheva, M. Borisova, S. Naydenova, *New Forms of Literacy and Transformation of Reading Practices in Bulgaria, KNYGOTYRA (Book Science)*, vol. 70, 2018 (forthcoming).

71 Albert Benbasat, *The False Science of the Book*. Sofia: Grazhdansko Druzhestvo Kritika, 2014, <http://book-alben.link/>, accessed June 4, 2018.

72 Vasil Zagorov and M. Encheva, "Digitization of the repertoire of books from the Bulgarian Revival (1801-1878)," in *ICERI 2017 Proceedings. IATED Academy* (2017), 3545–48.

Tsardom of Bulgaria (1878–1946) and the People’s Republic of Bulgaria (1946–89) are still relevant today. Time follows its ruthless course and gives rise to the need not only for the revision of existing academic works, but also an in-depth study of the literary reality of the period of socialism and the first decade of democratic transition. All this gives good reason to consider that Bulgarian book history, as a scientific and academic field of research, has a bright future.

Translated by David Mossop