

of the letters' addressees. Detailed footnotes and adequate references, such as indexes of names and geographical locations, complete this impressive academic project.

The publication is of exceptional academic value insofar as it presents Chiaromanni's epistolary travelogue both in its original Italian and in Bulgarian translation. His letters have finally been taken off the dusty shelves of archival collections and can find their way into the hands of researchers of the history of early modern European diplomacy. This edition supplements the list of sources, which shed light on the early modern period, and contributes new, valuable information on life and culture in the Ottoman Empire and its provinces, including the Bulgarian lands. It enriches scholarly research by adding yet another perspective to those provided by already published sources, such as the works of Sir Paul Rychaut (1629–1700), Giovanni Battista Donado (1627–1699) and Luigi Ferdinando Marsili (1658–1730).

Considering the undisputed merits of the book, I am convinced that the bilingual edition of Giovanni Chiaromanni's letters, compiled and edited by Penka Danova and funded by the Italian Cultural Institute in Sofia, is an exceptional contribution to both Bulgarian and international scholarship.

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Ivan Tyutyundzhiev. *Zarazhdane na nauchniya interes kam istoriyata na Osmanskata imperiya. Istoriografski etyudi.* M-Press Ltd., 2018. 155. ISBN 978-954-8455-93-0.

The Ottoman Empire was an important historical phenomenon and its history has repeatedly attracted the attention of scholars from different countries. It is amazing how the tiny *beylik* (principality), founded around 1300 in north-western Asia Minor, was transformed into a world empire which spanned three continents. In its heyday the Ottoman Empire was usually stereotyped as the “terror” of Christian Europe but it should also be borne in mind that European attitudes to it could be mixed, with fear being coupled with admiration. In the Balkan countries the period of Ottoman domination often provokes negative feelings as the Empire is traditionally regarded as an oppressor. That is why an unbiased assessment of the Ottoman period is very hard to achieve.

Titled *Zarazhdane na nauchniya interes kam istoriyata na Osmanskata imperiya. Istoriografski etyudi* (*The Origins of Scholarly Interest in the History of the Ottoman Empire. Studies in Historiography*), the last book of the late Professor Ivan Tyutyundzhiev (1956 – 2018) explores the establishment of a historiographic tradition, focused on the Ottoman Empire, and its subsequent development. The book is the first attempt in Bulgarian historiography to elucidate this problem. It will undoubtedly attract professional historians and students of history as well as members of the general public with an interest in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Needless to say, the book cannot claim to exhaust the subject in 155 pages but nevertheless constitutes a good basis for the further development of Ottoman studies in Bulgaria and abroad.

Professor Tyutyundzhiev gained both national and international recognition for his extensive work on a wide range of subjects, such as the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and its consequences, major Bulgarian chronicles (15th-19th centuries), church organization in the Bulgarian lands under Ottoman rule, anti-Ottoman resistance in south-eastern Europe and relations between the Bulgarians and the Eastern Orthodox world during the Ottoman period.

One of the book's aims is to make up for the deficiency of studies concerning the development of historiography in the Ottoman “classical age” (1300–1600) in contrast with the following period of “decay”

which eventually led to the demise of the Empire in 1922, followed by the abolition of the Caliphate two years later. This disproportion has resulted from the fact that primary sources, such as documents, collections, chronicles and calendars, from the later period are by far more plentiful.

The book consists of an introduction, five chapters, the presentation of the project “Historians of the Ottoman Empire” with a huge internet database, select historical sources and bibliography, a list of the Ottoman Sultans and a chronological table.

The introduction presents a brief overview of the history of the Ottoman Empire which successfully combined different traditions of imperial governance and thus turned into a powerful centralized theocratic and militarized state. The first chapter examines the beginning of the Ottoman historiographic tradition in the fourteenth century and its development up to the end of the sixteenth century. Due attention is paid to the pre-Islamic oral folk traditions of the Turkic tribes before their settlement in Asia Minor. The author stresses the strong influence of the Persian language and culture on Ottoman historiography. This influence proved lasting and it was not until the end of the sixteenth century that it was finally overcome and Ottoman historiography acquired a style of its own. Among the most prominent Ottoman historians of the early period were Ahmadi, Yazıcıoğlu Ali, Enveri, Idris Bitlisi, Tursun Bey, Mehmed Neşri and Kemalpaşazâde (Ibn Kemal).

The second chapter deals with the development of Ottoman historiography during the so-called “age of decay,” the first symptoms of which were visible in the late sixteenth century. There are numerous sources from this period, both domestic and foreign, such as chronicles, treatises, documents, travellers’ diaries and ambassadors’ reports. Some of the most distinguished authors of the “age of decay,” such as Mustafa Ali, Mustafa Selaniki, İbrahim Peçevî, Kâtip Çelebi (Hacı Kalfa), Solakzâde and Evliyâ Çelebi, not only described the state of the Empire but also tried to find ways for its recovery.

The focus of the third chapter is on post-Ottoman Turkish historiography. The distinctive feature of this historiography is the interpretation of Ottoman history through the prism of nationalism and the official political ideology promoted by the founder of the new republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Turkish historiography underwent a process of modernization and westernization as it tried to break with the Ottoman past. Yet along with the so-called “Turkish historical thesis,” which represented Turks as the most important ethnic group in the Ottoman Empire and was sanctioned by the government, there were some historians who deviated from the biased official line, the most prominent among them being Mehmet Fuat Köprülü.

In the fourth chapter the author presents European perspectives on the Ottomans through the work of some diplomats and scholars with first-hand knowledge of the Empire. For a long time the Ottoman Empire was viewed as “the terror of the world” and Europeans felt threatened by it. Things changed as it entered a period of long crisis. The traditional image of the Ottomans in Europe engendered a lot of negative stereotypes, including barbarity, tyranny and degeneration. Tyutyundjiev also focuses attention on some of the Europeans who contributed to the creation of a more objective view of the Ottoman Empire in the West: Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Leunclavius, Sir Paul Rycaut, Ignatius Mouradgea d’Ohsson, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall and Arminius Vámbéry.

The fifth chapter examines a number of conceptions of the ethnogenesis of the Ottomans. Thus, Herbert Gibbons claimed that they were not of Turkic ancestry, but were rather descendants of the local peoples (Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, etc.). According to Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, they were predominantly Turks, who had resettled to Asia Minor and the Balkans as a result of several consecutive invasions. In Paul Witteks’s view, they were warriors of Islam united by the idea of *gazavat* (holy war). Rudi Paul Lindner regards them primarily as conquerors pursuing their material interests rather than religion as many Christians, or former Christians, fought in their army. And finally, according to Cemal Kafadar, they were warriors of Islam following the idea of *gazavat* as a milder form of holy war in comparison with *jihad*, and for this reason some Christians were able to join the Ottoman army.

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