



DOI: 10.18778/2084-140X.10.26

ПЛАМЕН ПАВЛОВ, *Забравеното Средновековие* [PLAMEN PAVLOV, *The Forgotten Middle Ages*], Българска История, София 2019, pp. 303.

Last year, Plamen Pavlov – an outstanding Bulgarian researcher and promoter of knowledge about medieval (but not only) Bulgaria¹, for years associated with the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Veliko Tŕrnovo – published a book entitled *Забравеното Средновековие* [*The Forgotten Middle Ages*], the purpose of which was to familiarize a wide range of readers with less known issues related to the Bulgarian Middle Ages. The book consists of twenty-five texts. Some of them had already been published (but have been reviewed and supplemented by the author); others have “premiered” in the discussed book.

The Forgotten Middle Ages opens with the text *Кубер и „двойното начало” на средно-*

вековна България [*Kuber and the “double beginning” of medieval Bulgaria*] (p. 11–19). It is devoted to the role of the so-called Kuber’s Bulgaria (located in Macedonia), little known to the average reader, in the process of establishing the medieval Bulgarian state.

The protagonist of the next text *Кан Тервел и неговите съвременници* [*Khan Tervel and his contemporaries*] (p. 20–28) is Khan Tervel (700–720), successor of Asparuh (the founder of Danubian Bulgaria). The author also reflects on the rulers (of Byzantium, the Arabs, Khazars) as well as leaders with whom Tervel came into contact (especially during the Arabs’ siege of Constantinople in the years 717–718). Pavlov claims that Tervel deserves a prominent place in the pantheon of European heroes who defended Europe against the Arabs.

In the text *Кървавото лято на 811 година* [*The Bloody Summer of 811*] (p. 29–37), Pavlov outlines the achievements and figure of Khan Krum (802/803–814), paying particular attention to his victory in 811 over the Byzantine armed forces, commanded by Emperor Nicephorus I. He concludes by saying that due to his achievements and role in the history of medieval Bulgaria, Krum should bear the nickname “The Great”.

The article *Българската власт отвъд Тимок и Морава (краят на VII – средата на IX в.)* [*The Bulgarian power beyond the Timok and Morava (the late 7th – the mid-9th centuries)*] (p. 38–48) was devoted to the history of the Bulgarian presence on Serbian lands in the period between the late 7th and the mid-9th centuries.

¹ P. Pavlov is the author of numerous publications on the Bulgarian Middle Ages, but not only. The bibliography of his works includes several hundred items; the list of his works published up to 2019 – С. ГЕОРГИЕВ, Н. ХРИСИМОВ, *Списък на трудовете на Професор доктор Пламен Христов Павлов*, [in:] *Владетел, държава и църква на Балканите през Средновековието. Сборник в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д-р Пламен Павлов*, р. 1, ed. Н. КЪНЕВ, Н. ХРИСИМОВ, Велико Търново 2020 [= АММТ, 1], р. 26–80. For instance: П. ПАВЛОВ, *Княз Пресиан II (последният владетел на Първото българско царство и претендент за византийския престол)*, Стара Загора 1993; ИДЕМ, *Залезът на Първото българско царство (1015–1018)*, София 1999; ИДЕМ, *Българското средновековие. Познато и непознато. Страници от политическата и културната история на България, VII–XV век*, Велико Търново 2008; ИДЕМ, *Векът на цар Самуил*, София 2014; ИДЕМ, И. ТЮТЮНДЖИЕВ, *Османските завоевания и „Държавата на Духа”*, Велико Търново 2017.

The next text, mysteriously entitled „Осми-
ят” от седмочислениците [*The “eighth” of the
Seven Holy Men*] (p. 49–58) covers the activities
of Boris-Michael, who decided to introduce
Bulgaria into the circle of Christian states. Ac-
cording to Pavlov, his achievements in the reli-
gious sphere, including the support for the disci-
ples of Saints Constantine-Cyril and Methodius,
justifies calling him the eighth of the Seven Holy
Men (this term is used in reference to the disci-
ples of the Solun Brothers).

The text *Цар Симеон Велики и „исто-
рията на древните”* [*Tsar Simeon the Great
and the “ancient history”*] (p. 59–69) is devo-
ted to the political ideology promoted by Tsar
Simeon I the Great, according to which the
Bulgarians become “the chosen people” and Si-
meon – the new Moses.

In the article *Последните дни на цар Са-
муил* [*The final days of Tsar Samuel*] (p. 70–78),
Pavlov analyzes the source material on the cir-
cumstances of the death of Tsar Samuel. He
indicates, e.g. that since Samuel was a promi-
nent figure across the globe at that time, and his
death was recorded in sources of various prov-
enance. The Bulgarian scholar concludes his
arguments with a postulate that the remains of
Samuel – discovered in Prespa (in the Church
of St. Achilles) by the Greek scholar Nikolaos
K. Moutzopoulos, and not transferred to Bul-
garia – should be placed in the Hagia Sophia
Church in Sofia-Serdica, which was probably
his birthplace.

*Владимировият кръст – неизвестна ре-
ликва от времето на цар Самуил и неговите
наследници* [*Vladimir’s cross – the unknown re-
lic from the time of Tsar Samuel and his succes-
sors*] (p. 79–84) concerns the fate of the cross,
which John Vladimir (the prince of Duklja) was
said to have received from the Bulgarian ruler,
and which he yielded when he died in Prespa
at the order of Tsar Ivan Vladislav. Currently,
this cross is believed to be in the hands of the
Andrović family and used during religious cer-
emonies in one of the churches near Bar. Due
to the importance of this relic, Pavlov calls for
further research by Bulgarian and Montenegrin
scholars to verify whether the cross owned by
the Androvićs is indeed Vladimir’s cross.

In order to present Plamen Pavlov’s schol-
arly argumentation, we will devote a little more
space to characterize the next two, important
texts. The first of them: *Пресиан II – последни-
ят владетел на Първото българско царство
(1018 г.)* [*Presian II – the last ruler of the First
Bulgarian Empire (1018)*] (p. 85–97) is a sum-
mary of completely novel research by Plamen
Pavlov, related to the collapse of the First Bul-
garian State². It was dedicated to the last ruler
of this political creation (this fact has been prov-
en by Pavlov), namely Presian II (1018), the
eldest son of Tsar Ivan Vladislav (1015–1018),
so far considered to be the last ruler in early
medieval Bulgaria. Aware of the scarce and suc-
cinct references to Presian in the sources of the
era, the Bulgarian scholar convincingly recon-
structs the political life of this ruler. He points
to the significance of the name he received from
his father, which is a reference to one of the ear-
lier predecessors on the Bulgarian throne, from
the period before the official Christianization
of Bulgaria, that is, Khan Presian (836–852).
Pavlov sees this as evidence of dynastic ties
between the Komitopouloi and the family of
Krum himself, and perhaps also a suggestion on
the part of Ivan Vladislav at the seniority of the
Aaron family, from which he came, over that
of Samuel. In addition, the reference to Khan
Presian, during whose time the borders of the
Bulgarian state reached the Adriatic Sea and
the vicinity of Thessalonica, could have had
a symbolic meaning in the context of the strug-
gle with Byzantium in the second decade of the
11th century. The author points to the moment
when the Byzantine-Bulgarian war ended, which
is evidenced by the actions of the Byzantines, as
an important element of proving the tsarist ti-
tle of Presian II. The military stand, from which
Emperor Basil II (976–1025) himself report-
edly spoke to his victorious soldiers and de-
feated enemies (a custom cultivated since the
times of the Roman Republic), was ordered by
the *basileus* to be brought out only after Pre-
sian had surrendered. The latter, along with
his younger brothers, Alusian and Aaron, had
resisted the imperial army by taking refuge on

² П. ПАВЛОВ, *Княз Пресиан II...; ИДЕМ, Залезът...*

Mount Tomor. The defeated Bulgarian tsar received the high title of a *magister*³. Additionally, he and the rest of the ruling family and representatives of the Bulgarian nobility were included in the Byzantine aristocracy. In the past, another Bulgarian ruler, Boris II (969–971), had been dethroned and treated in the same way by Emperor John I Tzimisces (969–976). The hypothesis of the Bulgarian historian regarding Presian's tsarism is also confirmed by one of the miniatures in the so-called Venetian Psalter of Basil II, in which the Bulgarian was depicted dressed in the robes similar to those worn by the *basileus* and is clearly the most important figure among the eight representatives of the Bulgarian aristocracy displayed there. Pavlov follows Presian's further career, now as a Byzantine *magister* and strategist in Asia Minor, during which he twice participated in the coups against the reign of Constantine VIII (1025–1028) in 1026, and Roman III (1028–1034) in 1030 (according to Pavlov, and contrary to the popular belief that it happened in 1029). Importantly, the researcher opts for the interpretation in which the driving force behind Presian's actions was not the personal desire to seize the Byzantine throne as part of internal struggles within the East Roman aristocracy (as viewed, for instance, by a scholar of the same renown, Vassil N. Zlatarski), but the wish to restore Bulgarian statehood, the liberation of the Bulgarians from the Byzantine yoke, or the creation of a common Byzantine-Slavic state. This view is in line with a tendency noticeable in more recent studies by Bulgarian historians (Pavlov was the one who set its course) on the rebellions of the Bulgarian nobility within the Byzantine Empire⁴.

³ On the system of offices and titles in the Byzantine state hierarchy at the time, see, e.g. N. KANEV, *Byzantine Rank Hierarchy in the 9th–11th Centuries*, SCer 8, 2018, p. 153–165; ИДЕМ, *Emperor Basil II and the Awarding of Byzantine Honorific Titles to Bulgarians in the Course of the Conquest of Bulgaria (976–1018)*, SCer 9, 2019, p. 455–473.

⁴ Cf. e.g. P.C. ЙОРДАНОВ, *Заговорът на Елемаг и Гавра през 1019 г.*, [in:] *Хиляда години от битката при Беласица и от смъртта на цар Самуил (1014–2014)*, ed. V. Гюзелев, Г.Н. Николов, София 2015, p. 122–128.

The final accent of his deliberations concerns the death of the former Bulgarian tsar. Pavlov supports the version according to which the Bulgarian spent the last years of his life in Hungary (a view based on a mention of his name in an inscription discovered during archaeological research of the medieval rotunda in the city of Michalovce, Slovakia).

The second of the more extensively presented texts, *Загадката Петър Делян* [*The mysterious Peter Delyan*] (p. 98–105) was devoted to the leader of the greatest Bulgarian uprising against Byzantine power in 1040–1041. Pavlov follows the fate of the titular Peter from the moment he appeared in Byzantine sources until the final collapse of his endeavor, emphasizing the lack of knowledge about the actual origin and portrait of this representative of the Bulgarian aristocracy. The researcher presents Peter Delyan as a charismatic man, skilled organizer, and expert in military matters, although, according to the author, not a real descendant of the Komitopouloi family – the son of Gabriel Radomir and the grandson of Tsar Samuel. There are two new points to note in the reflections of the Bulgarian historian: a) the assumption (as stated by the archaeologist Ivan Petrinski) that Peter Delyan established a temporary capital of a renewed Bulgarian state – restored, at least, from a Bulgarian perspective – in Ostrovo (today the city of Arnissa in Greece) near Thessalonica, the second most important Byzantine metropolis in the Balkans, after the capital Constantinople; b) an indication that the nickname Delyan, which the Byzantine author Michael Psellos had derived from the Greek *dolianos*, meaning “crafty”, “cunning”, “deceptive”, actually comes from the Old Bulgarian verb *odoleti*, meaning “I win”, so the leader of the uprising would have the nickname corresponding to the Latin *Victor* – “The Winner”.

The next two texts *Бунтът на граничаря Нестор* [*The rebellion of the border guard Nestor*] (p. 105–113) and *Травъл и въстанието на павликяните (1084–1086)* [*Traullos and the Paulician Uprising (1084–1086)*] (p. 114–123) discuss the leaders of the rebellions that broke out in the Bulgarian lands in the 1070s and 1080s. They were led by the people who had

been in the Byzantine service before the revolt. Despite their Bulgarian origin, they did not choose to proclaim themselves as the tsars of Bulgaria and take up the fight to restore Bulgarian statehood.

In the text *Методите на „психологическата война“ във въстанието на Петър и Асен* [*The methods of psychological warfare in the Uprising of Peter and Asen*] (p. 124–134), Pavlov examines the methods applied by Theodore-Peter and Asen during the uprising against the Byzantines⁵. The author illustrates that in order to achieve their goals, they were able to skillfully use the social sentiments, national and psychological features, ideas, aspirations and fears of the medieval Bulgarians.

In the text *Към психологическия портрет на цар Калоян (1197–1207) и неговата политика* [*On the psychological portrait of Tsar Kaloyan and his politics*] (p. 135–145), Pavlov characterizes Kaloyan as having relatively extensive knowledge of Bulgarian history and knowledge of political partners, opponents and foes. He applied this knowledge expertly to implement his ambitious, imperial policies.

The next text *Военните съюзници на Второто българско царство* [*The military allies of the Second Bulgarian Empire*] (p. 146–163) presents the allies sought out by the rulers of the Second Bulgarian Empire. P. Pavlov elaborates in particular on the cooperation between the Bulgarians and the Cumans.

In the article *Иван Асен II „в страната на русите“* [*Ivan Asen II “in the land of the Rus”*] (p. 164–174), the author challenges the view that Ivan Asen II (and his younger brother Alexander) had been staying in the Principality of Galicia before taking up the fight for the Bulgarian throne against Boril. According to the researcher from Târnovo, the sons of Asen I had stayed in Kiev.

⁵ See also: К. МАРИНОВ, *Бунтовният Хемус. Масивът като база за нападения и убежище по време на първите Асеневици*, Епо 23.2, 2015, p. 330–347; ИДЕМ, *Новият Завет и византийската пропаганда. Още веднъж за Никита Хониат и българското освободително движение*, [in:] *Великите Асеневици*, ed. П. ПАВЛОВ, Н. КЪНЕВ, Н. ХРИСИМОВ, Велико Търново 2016, p. 70–83.

The text *„Латинските“ влияния в средновековна България* [*“Latin” influences in medieval Bulgaria*] (p. 175–185) illustrates Latin influences in Bulgaria, both political, cultural, and religious.

The section *„Снощи татари минаха...“* [*“Last night the Tatars marched through...”*] (p. 186–197) deals with the issue of Tatar influence (under Nogai and Chaka) in Bulgaria and the efforts to combat them (at the end of the 13th century).

In the article *„Царю Александре, твоят митничар да взема според закона...“* [*Tsar Aleksander, let your customs officer collect according to the law...“*] (p. 198–205), Pavlov, opening with the fragment of a *gramota* of the Wallachian voivode Radu I, quoted in the title, examines the issue of Bulgarian influence in 14th-century Wallachia⁶.

The text *Многото „Българи“ през XIV век* [*Multiple “Bulgarias” in the 14th century*] (p. 206–210) characterizes the decentralization process of the Bulgarian state in the 14th century, indicating that before the Turkish conquest, there had been several Bulgarian state centers with capitals in Veliko Târnovo, Vidin, Kaliakria, Prilep, Velbâzhd (today: Kyustendil) as well as so-called Byzantine Bulgaria with its capital in Mesembria (today: Nesebâr).

In the article *Българите и турската експанзия в Мала Азия (краят на XIII – средата на XIV в.)* [*Bulgarians and the Turkish expansion in Asia Minor (the late 13th – first half of the 14th centuries)*] (p. 211–230), Plamen Pavlov discusses the participation of the Bulgarians in the battles against the Ottoman Turks at the beginning of their expansion against the Byzantines. He formulates the view that *прадедите на българите от Беломорска Тракия [...] са между първите и най-смели борци срещу турската експанзия още във времето на нейното зараждане в Мала Азия* [*the ancestors of the*

⁶ Cf. also the most recent works devoted to this subject – Т. ПОПОВ, *Българската държавна традиция във Влашката низина, Молдова и Бесарабия от края на XII до края на XV в.*, София 2017; ИДЕМ, *Българското влияние върху държавните институции на Влахия и Молдова (XIV – началото на XVIII в.)*, София 2018.

Bulgarians from Aegean Thrace were among the first and boldest fighters against the Turkish expansion at its dawn in Asia Minor].

In the article *Константин и Фружин: за-лезът на средновековната българска държа-вност* [*Constantine and Fružin: the decline of medieval Bulgarian statehood*] (p. 231–238), the author presents interesting reflections on the functioning of some form of Bulgarian statehood (Vidin Bulgaria) after 1397, as well as the fates of Constantine II, son of Ivan Sratsimir, the ruler of Vidin, and Fružin, son of Tsar Ivan Šišman, the ruler of Tărnovo⁷.

The text *Патриарх Йосиф II и неговите ученици* [*Patriarch Joseph II and his students*] (p. 239–248) focuses on the activities of the Constantinople Patriarch Joseph II (1416–1439), Ivan Shishman's son out of wedlock. The author also outlines the profiles of his disciples (Bulgarians), including Ignatius, the metropolitan of Tărnovo, the Moldavian metropolitans Damian (1437–1447) and Teocist (1453–1478), or Cardinal Isidor (who, according to Pavlov, had Bulgarian roots).

In the article *Българи, начело на Печката патриаршия* [*Bulgarians at the helm of the patriarchy in Pécs*] (p. 249–264), the scholar lays out the profiles of the clergymen who were at the head of the Serbian patriarchy in Pécs (both in the first and the second period of its existence) and were Bulgarian by origin.

The last text „*Първите дами*“ на българското средновековие [*“First Ladies” of the Bulgarian Middle Ages*] (p. 265–282) reviews the medieval Bulgarian female rulers and Bulgarian women on the thrones of other countries. The author notes the scarcity of source data on women in medieval Bulgaria.

The book is supplemented with an introduction entitled *Често очевидното е незабележимо (встъпителни думи)* [*Often the obvious goes unnoticed (Foreword)*] (p. 6–9) and the bibliography (p. 284–303).

The above-discussed book provides a good insight into the research interests of Plamen

Pavlov and testifies to the freshness of his view on numerous aspects of the history of medieval Bulgaria. Although the book is intended for a wide range of readers of historical literature, it is also interesting and inspiring for scholars studying the history of Bulgarians and their country in the Middle Ages.

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⁷ In Polish literature, these issues are presented in: M.J. LESZKA, *Kwestia tzw. Powstania Konstantyna i Frużyna w bułgarskiej literaturze naukowej*, BPAS 21, 2014, p. 5–12.

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