

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
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## REVIEW

**For the dissertation of Tomasz Budai, doctoral student in self-study in the section "History of the World and International Relations in Modern and Contemporary Times" at the Institute for Historical Research – BAS for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy" in of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archeology, scientific specialty "New and Recent General History" with the topic of the dissertation "Balkan Policy of Austria-Hungary 1897 - 1906", 367 pp. by Professor Radoslav Zahariev Mishev, Doctor of Historical Sciences**

**Doctoral student data:** Tomasz Budai was born on December 27, 1974 in Budapest, Hungary. From 1983 to 1992 he studied at the bilingual High School "Hristo Botev", Budapest in the field of tour guiding and geography of tourism, studying English, Hungarian and German. From 1996 to 1998 he studied at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and received a bachelor's degree in international relations, associate in the international department and coordinator of international projects. In addition, in 1992-1997, Budai continued his studies at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and graduated as a master of history, historian and history teacher. From 2000 to 2004 he was a full-time doctoral student, and from 2017 to 2022 a doctoral student of independent training at the Institute for Historical Research at BAS on "Balkan Policy of Austria-Hungary 1897 - 1906" with supervisor Academician Georgi Markov. From 2003 to 2004 he worked as a manager in a real estate company, and from 2004 to 2006 as a director of marketing and exports in the CBA retail chain. In 2009 - 2010 he was the owner and manager of a company. In 2015 he was First Secretary and Commercial Attaché at the Hungarian Embassy in Sofia. From 2015 to 2019 he was Deputy Head of Department, and from 2019 to 2020 - Head of Department. In 2020 he worked in Hungarian foreign trade companies.

### **Description of the dissertation.**

The colleague, with the support of the research supervisor, focus on an important topic, which is part of the big issue of the foreign policy of the Habsburg state. Although such a state no longer exists, the historical science dedicated to this epoch repeatedly emphasizes its exceptional role in the fate of the Balkan peoples. The Habsburg state, together with Russia, plays an important role in stopping and pushing back the Ottoman invasion. A real turning point comes after the victory at Vienna in 1683, which has its effects on the Hungarian lands and the Balkan peoples under Ottoman rule. In 1806, the role

of the Habsburgs as Kaisers of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation ends and the period of the Austrian Empire begins, when it dominates the German Confederation. After the expulsion of the Habsburgs from Germany and Italy, and especially under Count Andrassy, the Balkans become the main goal of their foreign policy.

It is no coincidence that interest in this Central European Empire continues to grow. The problem of Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy in 1897-1906 is very significant, as it highlights five components of this policy: 1. It is part of the major theme of Austro-Hungarian initiatives in the Balkans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; 2. The principles and specifics of the foreign policy strategy of the General Minister of Foreign Affairs Agenor Count Goluchowski; 3. Its impacts and consequences on the Balkan countries during the period under review; 4. The place of the agreement in the general scheme of Austro-Russian relations in the Balkans; and 5. The role of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a "currency" in Austro-Russian relations. That is why I believe the topic is dissertable.

The author describes very well the preconditions for the active Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Structurally, the dissertation is very well constructed. The Austro-Russian agreement on the status quo in the Balkans of 1897 was taken as the initial border, and the final one was in the autumn of 1906, when important personal political changes took place in the dualist monarchy, the most important of which was the replacement of Agenor Count Goluchowski with Alois Count Erental, embarked on a new expansionist course in the foreign policy of the empire. The dissertation consists of an index of maps and tables, preface, introduction, three chapters, conclusion and bibliography, including sources and literature. Accordingly, the three chapters are: 1."The Austro-Russian Agreement on the Balkans (1897)"; 2."The Agreement in Action (1897 - 1902); 3."Austro-Russian unity in action in the Balkans (1902 - 1906)." The titles of the chapters and paragraphs are attractive and point to the essence of the material. The preface synthesizes the significance of the problem and the goals of the research in a synthesized and precise way. The author's theses and historiographical review are presented. In my opinion, the author's task is too modest. The introduction gives a brief description of the previous period. The stages of the Austro-Hungarian penetration of the Balkans are traced, in this respect the role of the *Ausgleich* from 1867, the orientation of Count Andrassy's policy towards the Balkans, the success of the Berlin Congress and especially the

achievements of Gustav Count Kalnoki, with whom there is talk about "Bulgarian success of our group". The first chapter, "The Austro-Russian Agreement in the Balkans (1897)", focuses on the trials of the Eastern Crisis of 1894-1898, and in particular the path to understanding between Vienna and St. Petersburg - June 1895 - August 1896. The second chapter, The Agreement of (1897-1902), describes and analyzes the difficult beginning, involving mutual doubts and behind-the-scenes competition. In addition, the Albanian factor, the Ottoman heritage and the dilemma of Macedonia, Romania as a Balkan ally of the Habsburg state are studied. A map is attached to the end of the chapter. The third chapter, "Austro-Russian Interaction in the Balkans (1903-1906)", places several emphasis. According to the author, they are the impossible calm or "the lid is cracking" - October 1902 - September 1903. It is clear that the desire of Austria-Hungary and Russia to comply with the status quo in the Balkans is put to the test by the uprisings. At the same time, Tomasz Budai realizes and shows the important trend of Austro-Hungarian supremacy in the agreement due to Russia's involvement in the Far East. Russia has a strong influence in the Balkans in the years when it acts as a mentor to the Balkan Christian nations. As a result, the Balkan states, with the exception of Albania, are recovering. Its distancing from the region due to its activity in the Far East actually benefits the Habsburg state. On the other hand, the Austro-Russian status quo agreement has a positive effect on the internal consolidation of Cisleitania and Transleitania in the common state (p. 85). Another point is the role of the economy and national homogeneity as foreign policy factors. The pointing is correct that in the economic ranking of the great powers Austria-Hungary is something of a medium power. This aspect of research is necessary for multinational empires. 5 tables and 2 maps were used. In the section "The beginning of the end" Tomasz Budai describes the exhaustion of the Austro-Russian agreement.

In my opinion, the submitted dissertation demonstrates the following advantages: the narrow chronological framework provides an opportunity to consolidate information about events, personalities and trends during the researched decade. In this way, Tomasz Budai analyzes in more depth the preconditions and essence of the Austro-Russian agreement of 1897. Budai skillfully and competently reveals the tangle of international relations, common and dividing points between Vienna and St. Petersburg. Cooperation does not eliminate the secret and permanent manifestations of contradictions. The periodization of the agreement proposed by the author - 1897 - 1902, 1903 - 1906 is acceptable. The title of the third paragraph in the third chapter "Austrian

supremacy within the Austro-Russian Union 1903 - 1906" eloquently shows the trend in this period. The problems of Austro-Russian cooperation illustrate the new realities in the phase of mature imperialism, when the old dynastic ties devalue and give way to new interests.

The doctoral student excellently traces the complex vicissitudes of the functions of the Austro-Russian agreement in the Balkans, characterized by cooperation and rivalry through the constantly emerging problems of national liberation movements in European Turkey, the crisis in Bulgarian-Romanian relations, the uprisings of 1902-1903. Emphasis is also placed on Albania, the Macedonian question, Romania, Bulgarian-Serbian relations, the methods of Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy, the February and Mürzsteg reforms, the fierce international struggles in Macedonia and the beginning of the end of the agreement. On the positive side, Budai focuses on Austria-Hungary's experience in ethnic engineering. Examples of this can be seen in Galicia, Albania and Bosnia. Some data in the speeches of Austro-Hungarian figures show a partial interest in trying this in Macedonia. In reality, however, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy is not taking steps in this regard. If there was such a policy, it would not go unnoticed by the Exarchate, the Bulgarian intelligence and trade missions in European Turkey and the IMRO. Probably the relevant circles have considered this inexpedient and currently out of perspective. There are reports of Catholic and Uniate propaganda in Macedonia and attempts to contact Bulgarian activists in the region. Boris Sarafov and T. Karayovov offered Austria-Hungary assistance in their religious propaganda and even a Habsburg prince to become governor of autonomous Macedonia, which was a maneuver. As Toma Karayovov says, "We will not give up our Bulgarian nation." The conclusion very well sets out the findings and conclusions of the author.

**Scientific contributions:** The dissertation is written on the basis of diverse and serious evidence, including Bulgarian, Austrian and Hungarian archives, published documents and literature. Information from Hungarian sources and research by the latest Hungarian authors is particularly important. The author introduces for the first time some hitherto unknown documents and works. The topic of the dissertation is multifaceted. The most important aspects of the Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy during this period are described and analyzed, which in itself require information gathering and analysis skill, as well as research qualities. A significant contribution is the revelation of the importance of the Hungarian state and political factor when the General Ministry of Foreign Affairs is headed by Agenor Count Goluchowski from Poland. In this sense, a significant

contribution is that Budai comprehensively examines the reign of Agenor Count Goluchowski with all the achievements, trends and failures, for example, when recruiting contingent from Transleitania. The functions of the emperor as the supreme administrator in the spheres of foreign and military policy and the Hungarian interpretations of these problems are analyzed. The role of political figures and domestic political events, as well as the Catholic Church in foreign policy trends is also shown. Tomasz Budai's conclusion about the conservative character of the Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy is correct (p. 18, etc.). The conclusion about the Austro-Hungarian advantage in the Austro-Russian status quo agreement is also scientifically substantiated. Albanian and religious factors are affected. There are valuable biographical achievements for Golukhovski and Talotsi. A positive and topical issue is the problem of ethnic engineering of some Austro-Hungarian figures. The author very objectively and accurately examines the ethnic status quo in Macedonia in favor of the Bulgarian national element, which testifies that he used the available authoritative documents in good faith. There is a huge amount of factual material. The attached bibliography is extensive and interesting. The work is to be read with interest.

The 34-page **abstract** presents the content, findings and conclusions of Budai in an excellent way. The scientific contributions provided are convincing and acceptable. At the end of the abstract the publications on the topic are given. I was impressed by the fact that Tomasz Budai, in addition to the traditional synthesized narration of the content of the dissertation, has singled out a special part in the paper – thesis of the dissertation, which I also accept. They are set out in the preface. The author's thesis is well-founded that during the crisis of 1902-1904, unlike other Balkan countries, Bulgaria found itself in greater isolation. According to him, here are hidden the reasons for Bulgaria's failure on the Macedonian issue. It is also interesting to note that the internationalization of the problem through the reform action is also a prerequisite for future failures. In my opinion, Bulgaria had the opportunity to overcome, albeit partially, the isolation in 1903.

Tomasz Budai has submitted a list of 7 publications, 4 of which are on the topic of the dissertation (1 in press) and 2 with a different focus. The publications on the dissertation topic are in renowned scientific journals and reflect the problems of the dissertation. In addition, his monograph on a problem in regional history is in print. As a doctoral student he has presented 4 conference papers. He has successfully completed the doctoral course with all the exams passed with the respective credits.

**Notes and recommendations:** In my opinion, it would be useful to deposit an ethnic map, or maps, in the Balkans during this era. I recommend future publication of the dissertation. Another interesting traditional problem is the role of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a "bargaining chip" in Russian-Austrian relations from the last Allied war of the Habsburgs and Russia against the Ottoman Empire to the Annexation Crisis of 1908-1909, to which more commentary could be given in the future publication of the dissertation. I liked the quote from Ivo Andrić's novel "The Drina Bridge". This may give rise to a new topic for historical commentary, concerning the dualistic nature of railway projects.

Tomasz Budai has written an original historical work. The doctoral student has not only made an effort, but has shown qualities to study, analyze and draw conclusions on such a broad, diverse and complex matter as the dissertation topic.

**Conclusion: Based on the highlighted scientific contributions and qualities of Tomasz Budai, I believe that the dissertation work and the doctoral student's activity fully meet the requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy". Submitted publications are also sufficient. Therefore, I confidently give a positive review and offer the esteemed Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy" to Tomasz Budai.**

14.05.2022