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When Urania Embraces Cleo. Nonchalantly about History or Eine Einführung in die Streichholzforschung*

Valery Stoyanov**

Abstract: From the marriage of Zeus with Mnemosyne, the nine classical muses came from. Among them, Urania (the muse of astronomy) and Cleo (the patron of history) were in a peculiar relationship at a time when the inspiration played a fundamental role for the intellectual work which was considered an art. The very name of Cleo (the “Glorious”) points to one of the concepts for the mission of history to tell about bygone events and to celebrate someone’s deeds. This makes it a subjective occupation, the results of which depend on the skills of the narrator and his attitude toward the target object, which is why issues, events and personalities receive conflicting assessments. The acts of Cleo and Urania in antiquity were often mixed up, and this creates confusion in clarifying the relationships of individual characters. But the interaction between the two sisters gave birth to the fruit of knowledge combining the scent of the universal infinity with poetry united in the essence of history. The very name (from the Greek ἱστορία – study, knowledge acquired through research) shows that the main task of a historian in his work is to study and verify the information, and only then comes the narrative, dressed in an appropriate form. Sources are of a various nature, so the individual disciplines involved with their analysis are also numerous. Thus, from the embrace of Urania with Cleo, the fundamental disciplines of history were born without which it could not claim to be a science.

1681 is considered to be the birth date of the auxiliary sciences of history. In this year Jean Mabillon’s profound work set the beginning of scientific diplomacies and palaeography. Subsequently, other works on the two disciplines were published; genealogy, heraldry, sigillography and historical chronology began to establish themselves as separate scientific and practical fields; over time a number of other specific areas in the study of source material occurred which gave rise to new and new special historical sciences. Then the nineteenth century came, which is perhaps the “classical century” of history, when having mastered the critical approach to the past and its sources, seekers of retrospective knowledge attempted to establish the norms in the historical process, and positivism was about to glorify history as a relatively objective science. However, the disappointment in the results, reinforced by the stress accompanying the ruination during the two world wars, contributed to the staggering at the other extreme and overestimation of the subjective moment in the past. Today historical

* (German.) Introduction to the study of matches.
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science, as we have known it until recently, still attracts the attention of the general public, but has long since ceased to be a “fortress of high knowledge”. The walls are dilapidated, the treasure of the shattered vault is dragged in an unknown direction and laity barbarians are wandering along the narrow labyrinths of the castle, announcing their own “truth” about past times. History has ceded more and more of its territories to science disciplines “sprouted” from it, satisfying itself with the role of a “side dish” and “appetizer” to the main dishes of politology, sociology, culturology, ethnology, anthropology. Still the hope remains that Foucault’s pendulum may swing back and the combination of the “subjectivist” experience with that of the verifiable “exact” sciences may produce a new vision of history not only as a fundamental interpretative science but also as an applicable in practice (experimental) science.

The article undertakes a brief attempt to trace the development and critical reflection of the studies of sources in Bulgaria focusing on the achievements of The Auxiliary Historical Disciplines Department at the Unified Centre of History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the successor of which is today’s Department of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Informatics. The author expresses concern about the tendency of uncontrolled “swarming” of the science, the result of narrow specialization, but he also conveys optimism about the achievement of various qualitatively new forms of collaboration between history and “exact sciences” with the help of digital humanities.

Keywords: Mythology, History, Genealogy, Auxiliary Sciences of History, Digital History

Strange were the relations between the deities in Antiquity. Or rather – people’s perception of them. In any case, what has come to us as contradictory information does not help us fully grasp what the ancients thought they knew about the Divine Order. Their life was a reflection of the passions, the whims and the rivalries between the members of a vast untouchable “royal” family, a monarchy par excellence, whose divine individuals were in complex relationships. And not only in the Mediterranean part of Europe where modern civilization is looking for its roots. The same complex hierarchy with a distribution of functional obligations is found in ancient Mesopotamia and in the Nile Valley, where history started as far as we know, because the main Sumerian deities with their Babylonian counterparts¹ have their parallels in ancient Greek and Roman mythologies. And it is these mythologies, which, through the Latin language, gave the names of the weekdays: the day of the Sun, the Moon, Mars,

¹ An / Anu (supreme God, ruler of Heaven), Nintu / Ki (the Mother Goddess, embodying the Earth, cf. the later Cybele / Semele), Enil / Elil – the god of the air and lord of the world, Enki / Ea (god of the primordial ocean, wisdom, magic, crafts, the creator of civilization, Nanna / Sin (the god of the Moon), Utu / Shamash (the god of the sun, justice and divination), Inanna / Ishtar / Isar (goddess of Venus, love and fertility).
Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. And by analogy with the features of the divine ‘ruler’, every weekday determines the character of the person born on it. With this we proceed to the topic which we are interested in, because here we are talking not only about the past (i.e. history), but also about particular scientific fields (astrology, chronology, genealogy), some of which are subsequently formed as auxiliary historical disciplines.

The antique world and its “divine reflection” were quite special. It is not known who was attracted to whom and who combined with whom but the result is an immense diversity of basic, major, secondary, and a whole host of third-order “divine” characters that fluttered in the sky, on the earth, in the waters and in the underground kingdom, engaging in their entertainments particular people to make the “interbreeding” more intertwined, just as it was at the time of the Biblical Nephilims. No wonder ancient authors tempted in mythology offered different genealogies, unless they were influenced by their attachment to their birthplace or by any other type of subjective preference the motives of which are difficult to trace today.

All of them are unanimous in one – the nine classical muses, patrons of the arts derived from the marriage union of Zeus with Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory (one of the Titans, daughter of Uranus and Gaea). Sometimes it is argued who was born first – whether Calliope, the muse of eloquence, epic and science, was the eldest, or the firstborn was Urania (the “Heavenly”) associated with the exaltation of the human spirit through imagination and the power of thought, with the pursuit of Heaven and stars. She was depicted with a celestial globe and a sceptre pointed at it (a pointer), she was believed to be able to predict the future by the location of the stars, and in Renaissance Europe she was identified with Universal Love and the Holy Spirit, and was defined as a muse of Christian poets.

2 Dies Solis (German: Sonntag, English: Sunday), Dies Lunae (French: lundi, German: Montag, English: Monday), Dies Martis (French: mardi, Greek: Ἀρρώσις ημέρα [the day of Ares], German tribes associated it with the god of war Tyr/Ziu, Cf. English: Tuesday), Dies Mercuri (French: mercredi, Italian: mercoledì), Dies Iovis (French: jeudi, Italian: giovedì, Spanish: jueves; Donnerstag in German, Thursday in English, Torsdag in Danish derive from the name of the god of thunder Donar/Thor), Dies Veneris (French: vendredi, Italian: venerdì. Freitag in German and Friday in English derive from the name of the goddess of love Freya or Frīa – guardian of family and motherhood), Dies Saturni (English: Saturday, Dutch: Zaterdag).

3 Biblical giants were the offspring of the “sons of God”, i.e. “fallen angels”, and Cain’s “daughters of men” before the Deluge, according to Genesis 6:1-4.
Urania is the muse of astronomy. Today this may seem strange, because of the carved gap between the exact sciences and the interpretative ones, including history. But once, when inspiration played a fundamental role in the intellectual work, all this was seen as art. Perhaps, therefore Alexandrian philologists divided Herodotus’ History into nine parts, each named after one of the Muses. The name of Urania was given to the eighth book of the work, and this is somewhat in line with the arrangement of the Muses in Pseudo-Apollodorus, where the most senior is Calliope, and immediately after her comes Cleo.

Cleo ("The Glorious") is the true patron of history. The name, deriving from the verb κλέω or κλείω ("tell, glorify, make famous"), seems to point to one of the notions of the essence of history — to tell of past events and to glorify one’s affairs. This is how we most often understand history today — that is why the audience enjoys jubilee celebrations. This aspect, however, in which the accent falls on the narrative ("I’ll tell you a story", "Ich erzähle dir eine Geschichte") and which is largely preserved to this day, makes History (Geschichte) a subjective occupation whose results depend on the narrator’s skills to appropriately present the subject. The attitude of the author to the topics, personalities and events also matters, which is why they often get contradictory assessments. The great figures and heroes of an epoch can turn into villains and anti-heroes in another epoch, and their description can range from uncritical exaltation to full stigmatization. And this applies not only to crucial turning times when it is extremely fun to watch how people who have previously written praise now rush to be among the most active deniers of the past in line with the “new commandments of the time”. Hence the disappointment of the untempted consumer of historical writings, dissatisfied with the changing picture. He wants to know what “exactly” happened and in vain seeks to understand the “complete” truth, to hear the “final” judgement of the past, which, alas, historians fail to present him.

The patron of historiography, Cleo is also a muse of epic poetry, and hence perhaps of playing the lyre. Thus she helps to glorify the great deeds of the forefathers and to record them for the coming generations. This is why she is depicted with a slate-pencil and an open scroll, because litera scripta manet ("the written remains") even if we know that sic transit gloria mundi ("thus passes the glory of the world"). Paisius may not have been aware that he had received the favor of the muse, but like a true Homer he followed her steps, glorifying the greatness of the ancestors to awaken the minds of the people and prevent their cultural melting. ‘Cleo is also a muse!’ exclaimed the great Vera
Mutafchieva. Great, because the greatness of a person is determined by what they have created, not by the positions occupied and the accumulated material goods. Sometimes I feel sorry for those colleagues who abandon their vocation to become government yes-man – well paid, but still servants of power. I should not blame them – everyone chooses how to live. But if Cleo is a muse, how much inspired are her “clergy”? Perhaps there are few who can enthusiastically recreate the past realities. Apart from Vera, I can mention here an Andrei Pantev, whose style bears a slight resemblance to the sensual intellectual expression of Peter Uvaliev. Upon the founding of the Humboldt Union in Bulgaria, Uvaliev honored us with his presence – while the then President of BAS Angel Balevski was reciting his poems in German to the honorable guests from Germany, I felt like kissing Uvaliev’s hand for all that he represented...

Muses are to inspire. Cleo captivated the king of Piraeus, Pierus – the son of Macedon (is this the reason why the Macedonians set themselves at the beginning of human history?) and gave birth to his son Hyacinth. There are other versions⁴, according to which Hyacinth’s father was not Pierus, but Amyclus the king of Sparta, and his mother was not Cleo but Diomedes. This only testifies how uncertain mythological genealogies can be – just as the subjectively dyed memories that are now used as sources in the anthropological approach in history. With his unusual beauty, Hyacinth attracted the love of Apollo, but also of Zephyrus (or Boreas). In these circles, so relevant today, feelings are often burning. According to the legend, the jealous wind (whether it was “light” or “stormy”) deviated the disk thrown by Apollo to the head of Hyacinth and killed him, and the broken Apollo created the flower hyacinth from the blood of his beloved. This flower in Bulgarian is called zyumbyul and it bears another important difference from the liberal Europe, because in the local patriarchal culture the Turkish-Persian noun has a female connotation – “Zyumbyul li si, lale li si, gyul li si” (“Are you a hyacinth, are you a tulip, are you a rose”, a singer asks a maiden. Translator’s note), while to the west of Budapest, the same hyacinth is associated with the long-suffering Werther, who redirected his feelings from Lote to another loner like him.

In other accounts Cleo is the mother of Hymenaeus (he is actually the child of Calliope and Magnes, Macedon’s brother, or she is the mother of Lynus of Argos, brother of Pelasgas. This might tempt some people to look (in the way Macedonians do) for the connection of today’s Bulgarians with Pelasgians and Cleo, i.e. to put the imaginary ancestors of modern Bulgarians at the centre of historical development. Not that some people do not do it, but it is within the scope of an artificial reconstruction of the past in which our image of the nation and the state is mechanically translated into a completely different reality, inadequate to modern times.

There are versatile versions of the birth of Lynus, the teacher or brother of Orpheus and the composer of the songs for Dionysus and other ancient heroes and themes, including the creation of the world, which he is said to have recorded with the pre-Hellenic “Pelasgian” letters. In one of these versions, he is a child of Poseidon’s son Ampharos and Cleo, but usually Lynus is presented as the son of Urania and Heracles, or rather of Urania and Apollo. His talent provoked his father’s envy, and Apollo killed him. According to other data, Urania is also mother of Hymenaea (as Cleo is mother of Hymenaeus). This once again shows how unclear are the links between individual mythological characters – as if the Divine Orgie has paved the way to today’s world where it is no longer known who with whom, or what for...

Thus, in the most ancient mythological times, the acts of Urania and Cleo often intertwined, and their ecstatic inspiration gave birth to the fruit of a knowledge combining the scent of the universal infinity with poetry united in the essence of history. The very name (from the Greek ἴστορια – study, knowledge acquired through research) shows that the main task of a historian (ἱστοράς – meaning knowledgeable scholar) in his work is to study and verify the information, and only then comes the narrative (the story), dressed in an appropriate, be it artistic, form. It is precisely the analysis of the source material that allows outlining a more compressed and more reliable picture of the desired element or fragment of the past, limited within the specific time and space frames. Sources are of a various nature, so the individual disciplines involved with their analysis are also numerous. Thus, from the embrace of Urania with Cleo, the fundamental disciplines of history were born without which it could not claim to be a science. Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) once claimed that history was not a science at all, but pretended to be such through falsifications and omissions. Over time, along the boundary of historical and philological knowledge, symbiosis with a number of “exact” sciences has emerged, provid-
ing methodological “know-how” also to historical research, which seems to defy the British scholar and extend Cleo’s ability to fit in a new way in Akashic field of information. Because the auxiliary (special, fundamental) disciplines of history are those who raise it to the pediment of true SCIENCE. Otherwise, it would be a mere servant (politicians of all ages prefer it to be), uncritically praising the powerful of the day and criticizing or exalting its own time, according to the subjective assessment of the author.

If the roots of history as a specific intellectual occupation go back to antiquity, where it shares territory with mythology, epic poetry, hymnography, and a number of other activities relating both to logical and intuitive knowledge and to the art that emotionally recreates our attitude towards the world, its true scientific appearance has been shaped only since the seventeenth century. This seemingly long time is just a moment of Brahma’s breath, a moment of eternity – that is how long the fertile glimmer in the embrace of the divine sisters lasts.

1681 is considered the birth date of the auxiliary historical sciences. Not that their sprouts at a practical level had not existed before. Our earliest “predecessors in vocation” used along with mythological themes, descriptions of foreign countries and peoples with their mores and customs; important events committed to memory received from accounts of eyewitnesses or from indirect sources. This often unverifiable information was intertwined in the historical narrative and then transmitted (with more or fewer variations) by an author to an author, because even then there was the “good practice” for scientists to quote the sources they used, even when they supplemented or changed them. In the course of time, authors started referring to the writings of their predecessors – they inserted whole paragraphs of works subsequently lost, thereby retaining for the generations particles from the building materials, used in human spiritual quests. Written documentary material was also a product of civilization development, used by ancient historians – excerpts from documents are quoted in chronicles, in descriptions of dynastic stories, in universal church history. In the Middle ages, their counterfeiting, aimed at confirming old or acquiring new rights, triggered after the Thirty Years’ War a real clash between the claims of possessions and privileges backed by diplomas known in history as bella diplomatica (diplomatic wars). Practical litigation needs for expertise on the authenticity or falsity of the documents presented in legal disputes led to the creation of rules for criticism of written acts, and of old literature in general. Thus, in the “Early Modern Times”, blind trust in the written word, be it God’s,
was replaced by a critical attitude towards the surrounding world – the germ of every science. If verification is “mother of knowledge”, it is possible to achieve it only after a break with dogma and after raising inadmissible questions, the answers of which expand the horizon of knowledge. The critical method penetrated into theological circles as well – the history and even the authenticity of Scripture texts was subject to verification, which further deepened the gap between the two “wings” of Christianity – the western looking for scientific confirmations of God’s majesty, and the Eastern one, stigmatizing every doubt as apostasy (which is still the practice in today’s Islamic world).

In the “science of the past” every fact is relative, as is the chronological framework defining it. Even before 1681, individual scientists were concerned with making rules to establish the authenticity of written testimonies. But it was Jean Mabillon’s profound work that set the beginning of scientific diplomatics and palaeography, and even of the auxiliary historical sciences. Subsequently, other works on diplomatics (which at first was auxiliary legal discipline, but then turned into an auxiliary historical discipline) and palaeography (mainly Latin) were published; genealogy, heraldry, sigillography and historical chronology began to establish themselves as separate scientific and practical fields; over time, archaeology and ethnology were separated from history; and a number of other specific areas in the study of source material have occurred which give rise to new and new special historical sciences.

A cursory comparison with what was happening at that time in Bulgarian lands only proves the remoteness of the Balkan Peninsula from the European development and the doom of the Balkan peoples to catch up with the achievements of European culture. When Mabillon’s work appeared in 1681, containing a number of etchings of Meroving documents (and this sets the standard for future source studies) the Chiprov Uprising had not yet erupted in Bulgaria, and it was only after its suppression when part of the more active

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5 For example, Hermann Conring, John Boland, Daniel van Papenbroeck (Papebroch) and others. See Jesuit Johannes Bollandus’s critical series of saints’ lives “Acta Sanctorum” (1596–1665); H. Conring, Censura diplomatica quod Ludovico imperatori fert acceptum con- nobium Lindaviense. Helmestdii, 1672; D. Papebroch. Propylaeum antiquarium circa very et falsi discrimen in vetustis membranis. 1675.

and more conspicuous Bulgarian Catholics emigrated to the Austrian Empire. Nearly 80 years later, St. Paisius wrote his Istvolya Slavyanobolgarskaya based on domestic and foreign sources found by him. Then, using Russian translation of the famous work of Mavro Orbini for the "Slavonic Kingdom", he defined the author as "some Mavro, a Latin". What better illustration of the remoteness of the two Christian civilizations (the east and west) from each other. But if Bulgarians today do know something about "Mavro" west of Kalotina, only a few specialists in Slavic (and Bulgarian) history, literature and culture know about Paisius. Such is the fate of small peoples – to study the affairs of the “big ones” without reciprocity. This, however, gives them chances that the “big ones” do not have. Why are we then surprised by the ignorance of the “standard” representatives of today’s great nations? Not that ours are much different… However, let us not forget that “those ones” are the product of the idea of the consumer society, which we are joining now. And that when their ancestors revealed new horizons; when they inculcated their culture all over the world; built architectural wonders, and created new and new machines, ours preferred to lie in the shade by the brook with the chilling watermelon in it. (Another look at the issue of the “Turkish yoke” …)

The nineteenth century is perhaps the “classical century” of history – at that time, having mastered the critical approach to the past and its sources, seekers of retrospective knowledge attempted to establish the norms in the historical process, and positivism was about to glorify history as a relatively objective science. However, the disappointment in the results, reinforced by the stress accompanying the ruination during the two world wars, which prompted Einstein to identify the infinity of the universe with that of human stupidity, contributed to the staggering at the other extreme and overestimation of the subjective moment in the past. Historical science, as we have known it until recently, still attracts the attention of the general public, but has long since ceased to be a “fortress of high knowledge”. The walls are dilapidated, the princess is abducted, the treasure of the shattered vault is dragged in an unknown direction and laity barbarians are wandering along the narrow labyrinths of the castle, announcing their own “truth” about past times. History has ceded more and more of its territories to science disciplines that “sprouted” from it, satisfying itself with the role of a “side dish” and “appetizer” to the main dishes of political science, sociology, cultural studies, ethnology, anthropology. And if this is not noticeable for insiders, the worse for them! If scholar historians do not adapt to the new rules of time, they will become outsiders and fall out
of the flow of this world, so rapidly changing. Or maybe not? Who knows, Foucault's pendulum may swing back and the combination of the “subjectiv-
ist” experience with that of the verifiable “exact” sciences may produce a new vision of history not only as a fundamental interpretative science but also as an applicable in practice (experimental) science? The future sometimes brings unexpected solutions to seemingly “entangled” cases.

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I was thinking of writing about the specifics of the auxiliary historical sci-
ences and about the role of the Institute for Historical Research in their develop-
ment in Bulgaria, but the text took its own way and its frivolity left me no al-
ternative but to follow the reflections of the vaguely flashing thoughts. Because we often perceive more completely the shadows of unincarnated truths than the footsteps on the sand of time expecting to be erased by the ocean of eternity.

When the new Bulgarian nation ranked among the few state-creating ones in the world, its best intellectual representatives managed to stand on the shoulders of European giants and catch up with their spiritual achievements, including in the field of historical science. It became one of the leading strands in the Literary Society – the future Academy of Sciences – founded before the Liberation. Prominent members of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – the pride of the then scientific elite – contributed to the disclosure, critical reading and increasing of the wealth of historical sources. Of course, initially, the emphasis was on the practical activities with specific types of sources, but the accumulated processed empirical material created the conditions for the subsequent elevation of the studies at an even higher theoretical level. Thus, in the post-liberation period and during the years of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom, scientists began to work for the first time in the field of a number of auxiliary sciences, such as the Slavonic and Greek palaeography, the Ottoman palaeography and diplomatics, numismatics, sigillography, epigraphy. This time imprinted in the memory of the next generations the names of a large number of scholars who contributed to enriching the source fund of Bulgarian historical science. However, these linguists and historians, archaeologists and literary scientists, specialists in Slavonic and Turkic studies who deciphered, published or commented on old texts (manuscripts and documents), or extracted evidence from the then available numismatic and epigraphic material, remained valuable erudite, who were undoubtedly useful for enriching the source base but did not
take to systematizing their experience and theoretical knowledge gained from working with the sources. Perhaps these were the challenges of the time then – first of all to search, describe and publish the sources of the past, and then to proceed to their rationalization as an independent research object.

After World War II, renowned Bulgarian scholars such as Ivan Duychev, Veselin Beshevliev, Ivan Venedikov and many others suffered after the political turnaround – some of them lost their positions as university lecturers and turned to other careers. It was only then when the first work in the area of auxiliary historical sciences appeared – Lectures on archivistics by I. Duychev (1949/1950) printed on a cyclostyle. The work offers important practical observations and advice to the future archivists, as well as information on the structure of medieval documents presenting for the first time in Bulgaria the foundations of diplomatics. A new step in the field was made with Boris Nedkov’s monograph on Ottoman-Turkish Palaeography and Diplomatics, published in 1966 (the second volume, containing selected Ottoman documents and a glossary of the basic terms, came about a decade later), which became a valuable tool for all specialists in Ottoman history in the country. In the 1960s, the Communist regime loosened once again its grip. Stalin’s death and the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution gave rise to a policy of the so-called thaw in social and political relations, which reflected well in all spiritual spheres of Bulgarian society – not only in art (in the rehabilitation of abstractionism and jazz) but also in the humanities – those were the “golden years” of Ottoman studies in Bulgaria. Gradually, more and more attention was paid to the Bulgarian antiquities and with the rise of Lyudmila Zhivkova, the opportunities of the Old-Bulgarian, Thracian and other ethnic and national dyed areas for overexposure of “past grandeur” also grew enormously.

As early as 1964, the former Department of History of the Balkan Nations at the Institute of History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences grew into an independent Institute for Balkan Studies, which, through the Association internationale des études sud-est européennes founded the previous year, became the living connection between Bulgarian thought and European hu-

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7 Hristo Kodov, for example, who was fluent in seven languages, retired as a locksmith (sic)!
manities. From the very beginning, Balkan studies were headed by Nikolay Todorov, who "took under his wing" the young graduate in history Lyudmila Zhivkova, who was yet to flourish. Another lecturer of L. Zhivkova, Alexandar Fol, headed the Institute of Thracology, established in 1972, at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Todor Zhivkov's daughter rehabilitated a number of eminent scholars from the older generation (I. Duychev, V. Beshevliev) and encouraged the Old-Bulgarian and the Early Bulgarian Studies – in 1977 *Paleobulgaria* journal began to come out, and next year *Problemi na kulturata* (Cultural Issues) journal appeared as a body of the "Research Institute of Culture", where among the many enthusiasts, the future "first democratically elected president", Dr. Zhelyu Zhelev, also found shelter. Approximately at that time (1973) and in connection with the same political situation, the Auxiliary Historical Disciplines Department was founded as an independent unit at the Unified Centre of History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, on an equal footing with the other "historical" institutes. Its leader, Kancho Georgiev (1927–2006), who belonged to the archivist circles, also owed the institutionalization of the unit to his favourable relationship with the then "first lady" of the regime. Top-level contacts favoured the emergence of other research entities – History of Bulgaria under Socialism Department, headed by Mito Isusov (1972), Cyrillic-Methodian Research Centre headed by Petar Dinekov (1980), the General History Department at the Institute of History, founded by Konstantin Kosev (1981), the Centre for Culture Studies at Sofia University, established by Nikolay Genchev (1981), etc.

The Auxiliary Historical Disciplines Department, the successor of which is today’s Department of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Informatics, was tasked with developing these areas of knowledge in view of the methodological problems encountered in dealing with different types of sources. In the course of time it became a major scientific unit in the country, engaged in the fundamental sciences of history. Indeed, after the establishment of the Faculty of History at the Sofia University (1972), the Department of Archival Studies and Auxiliary Historical Disciplines (the present Department of Archivistics and Methodology of History Education) was founded, but, as the name implies, the emphasis of its activity is different. Therefore, the misunderstandings between the representatives of the two related units appear to be a little strange, but they can be explained mostly by personal biases related to the desire of protecting "one’s own professional terrain". Later, courses in one or another special historical science
began to be conducted in other higher schools, but they were not institutionalized.

Gradually, the Department started “covering” major areas of auxiliary historical sciences as theoretical study of historical sources\(^{10}\), archeography\(^{11}\), Slavonic palaeography\(^{12}\), Greek palaeography\(^{13}\), Ottoman palaeography and diplomacy\(^{14}\).


\(^{12}\) M. Dimitrova. Из кодикологично-палеографската проблематика на средновългарските рукописи. – ПИД, 4, 1986, 115–146; M. Dimitrova. Стил в орнаменти и проблемата на средновългарските рукописи. – Старобългаристика, 12, 1988, № 3, 80–109 and others.


Bulgarian diplomacy\textsuperscript{15}, historical metrology\textsuperscript{16}, historical demography\textsuperscript{17}, genealogy\textsuperscript{18}, heraldry and sigillography. With the expansion of the research interest to


\textsuperscript{15} V. Стоянов. Дипломатика на средновековните извори. Владетелски документи. София, Изд. на БАН, 1991, 263 р. (sec: Chapter II. “Дипломатика на българските царски грамоти”).


\textsuperscript{17} П. Пейковска. Българските общности в Унгария през XIX–XX век. Миграции и историко-демографска характеристика. София, Институт за исторически изследвания при БАН, 2011. 402 р.

other border areas of the humanities, the department also initiated studies in the field of historical ethnology, anthropology and ethnical politology – by focusing on Chinese issues and Eurasian horse nations, which leads to the establishment of "cumanology" as a new complex discipline. In 1979, the Department started...
issuing its own journal, *Auxiliary Historical Disciplines*, which has been indexed by *American Historical Abstracts* since the 1980s. It contributes to the integration of the specialists in the field by publishing materials on different auxiliary sciences, presenting their state in various countries, and their relationships with other areas of knowledge. After a certain break during the first decades of the transition, the series started being issued again, but with a different appearance and content corresponding to changed conditions.\(^2\) For its over 40 years of existence, the unit has carried out considerable research. It also became a centre for the preparation and publication of *Rodoznanie/Genealogia* journal as an organ of the Bulgarian Genealogy Federation *Rodoznanie*. Thus, the Department of *Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Informatics*, along with its role as a centre of research in the field of theoretical study of sources, has become also a centre for work in Bulgarian genealogy. We can only hope that this department will create a “core” of specialists dealing with the study of sources about history and culture of the peoples of Central and Eastern Asia and their relationship with the surrounding sedentary civilizations. Implementation of “Digital history” is another perspective for the members of the Department. The solution to these tasks can be achieved by involving already established specialists in the field and / or by further expanding the perimeter of scientific interest.

This is hardly the place to announce the scientific achievements of the unit. It was primarily required to “import” the foreign experience and to promote its dissemination and assimilation on Bulgarian soil. All members of the scientific team did this — everyone in their research field. In addition to this noble task, however, some have tried to expand their own knowledge horizon by building on past experience and proposing new solutions to the pressing issues of individual auxiliary disciplines. And it is here that the amalgam of the accumulated practical knowledge and the motivation to “create” yet undiscovered lanes has been manifested. One of the examples is related to the name of the founder of the unit Kancho Georgiev – his views on archeography and the

\(^{2}\) A list of the volumes so far, together with their content and images of their covers, is available on the website of the AHDI Department — <http://www.auxiliary.ihist.bas.bg/publications_PID.html>. See also an earlier online information by PhD S. Stanimirov — <http://www.ihist.bas.bg/sekci/PINI/PID/contentB.htm>.

source disciplines of history were like a fresh breeze over the vestigial look at the essence of the historical sciences. Another example is his successor [Valery Stoyanov, translator’s note], who tried to “create novelties” both in the field of diplomacy and in connection with the horse steppe peoples (mainly the Cumans), the analysis of the research of whom led to laying the foundations of a whole complex discipline. I cannot fail to mention the exceptional merits of Antoaneta Zapryanova. She could reasonably be considered a co-founder of the Department because she took active part in the preparation and publication of the journal of Auxiliary Historical Disciplines, various aspirant competitions and numerous scientific events. Her research contributions are quite a lot. But perhaps among the most significant ones is the attempt to typologize the auxiliary historical sciences, grouping the disciplines according to the nature of the source material and their functionality. It is as important for Bulgarian historiography as is important for the German one the work of Ahasver von Brandt “Werkzeug des Historikers: eine Einführung in die historischen Hilfswissenschaften“, reissued dozens of times since 1958. The typology developed by Zapryanova is not as “cleared” in the grouping, but it covers a much larger number of disciplines, including “non-traditional” ones. It is no coincidence that the text of this publication found its place in the “Digital Library of Archives and Documentary Studies”, prepared under the guidance of Adriana Neykova from Sofia University (2012).

The typology contains some controversial aspects as well. Above all, it is a question of a conventional understanding of how much the use of the attribute “historical” gives sufficient grounds for adopting a particular area of knowledge as “auxiliary historical discipline”. Is historical bibliography, for example, an auxiliary science of history with its own subject of research and its own methodology (for example, in studying old books) or is it just a bibliography of history works? The same applies to many other disciplines, defined as “historical”. It should not, of course, be forgotten that the development of science is formed by the interaction of the two opposite processes of disintegration and integration, division and accumulation, differentiation and fusion, yin and yang, which is reflected in the basic methods of research – the methods of analysis and synthesis. Therefore, no matter how blasphemous it may sound,

* (German) “An Instrument of a Historian: An Introduction to Historical Auxiliary Sciences”.
a science can be “created” for everything – it is enough to have an object of research and methodology with which it is to be conducted, expected results and last but not least – means and “hot-brains” (sometimes – “hot-brains” are self-sufficient).

Let us imagine, for the fun of it, a science of matches – a thing quite important to the household (and not only) – and let us call it “kibritology” [kibrit in Bulgarian means matches. TN]. Studying the benefits of matches kibritology would be part of the much wider field of energetics, but it would also have points of contact with chemistry and physics, as well as with anthropology, sociology, study of arts (in relation to the artistic layout of the label), literary studies (they will investigate who wrote what about the matches and how), linguistics (studying different terms for matches in a comparative plan, incl. “drazni-palni-klechitsa:” [“scratch and light a match” – an attempt at replacing the Turkish word kibrit with a Bulgarian equivalent, TN]] etc. The connection to history in this case is of paramount importance because the matches appeared at a given time, replacing more archaic means of lighting fire, and underwent a significant evolution in appearance and quality before giving way to the lighter as a more functional tool. In this case what could be the role of the history of matches – as part of the field of the study of it or a separate discipline called “historical kibritology”? And what would it do for the benefit of a future society where it is not known whether matches will ever be used? This problem, which we can describe as “Streichholzforschung Syndrome”, only testifies to the danger of uncontrolled “swarming” of a science that Jonathan Swift was aware of in his brilliant satire about Gulliver and the inhabitants of the flying island. I leave aside the speculation with the satellites of Mars found by the islands astronomers, discovered 150 years after the publication of the book of the great Irishman. Is it not, however, better to allow science to develop under its own laws, instead of trying with administrative measures to look for the “surplus effect”?

The last part of the typology offers another reason for reflection, because it numbers among the auxiliary historical sciences different “disciplines of general heuristic importance”, such as: “theory of systems, mathematics, theory of communications, theory of programming and computing technologies” and others. If we show an understanding of the fact that physics, chemistry and mathematics are among the auxiliary sciences, and here we see the possible border lanes of the listed areas and history, we will notice the prognostic element in the whole scheme. Because with the improvement of IT technologies
and their rapid penetration in the humanitarian sector, horizons unthinkable until two or three decades ago has opened up to the historical science and its disciplines. The “digital history” discipline arises before our eyes as part of the digital humanities, whose place is only among the auxiliary historical sciences! Its roots can be traced back to the 1970s, when, in the debate on the future of historical research, attempts were made to establish a new auxiliary discipline to deal with electronic data processing in historical science.\textsuperscript{23} Then such discipline did not occur, but the idea continued to float in the air, and today, after decades of accelerated development in the IT sphere, the question of the need for digital auxiliary science related to historical research is again on the agenda.

The problem is extremely complex, because it is not only about the practical use of digital tools for the accumulation, storage, analysis, visualization and presentation of historical information (which has been done for decades in the context of an already established “digital history”)\textsuperscript{24}, but also because such a path of development implies closer co-operation between historians and programmers or a more complex qualification of the researcher of the past. Just as today we type our texts on the computer, which replaced the old typewriter, and we do not hand our manuscripts to a typewriter specialist in the manner of totalitarian times, so in the future, professional historians will have to be able to use not only word-processing programs but also a number of other software products, they should even have basic knowledge of modifying (if not creating) new digital tools suitable to their work. Such is the “command of time”. At present, digital history is still associated with digitalisation of data, bibliographies and publications; with the establishment, maintenance and use of digital libraries and archives; with the “networking” of humanitarian scientists dealing with related issues (that is, the creation of scientific digital networks in history); with visualizing the research products (via websites and web pages containing a set of databases, graphical images, charts and diagrams, also audio, video and text files that clarify different aspects of the subject under con-


sideration), in other words, it is related to the use of the opportunities provided by IT technologies for methodological enrichment of the research process and more complex presentation of the results obtained. However, *digital history*, in its capacity of an auxiliary science, should also focus on the analysis and criticism of digital sources and development of approaches and methods that better respond to the new ways of working with historical information and its understanding. It is also expected that the activities in the sphere of digital history such as Auxiliary sciences of history will help to formulate new questions and topics that will enrich the field of historical quests. A future third phase in the development of *Historia digitalis* would be the elaboration of mechanisms for “simulating” different options and variants in interpreting historical development as a system of multiple (including unfulfilled) realizations.

All this testifies that the development of historical science and its fundamental disciplines is far from over. It is not a stale image in the “rear-view mirror” but a ceaseless process. *Urania* and *Cleo* continue to flirt with us, changing the outlines of the cognitive horizon. They are playing with our imagination, nurturing the question, “What else is behind the next turn?” They make us rethink the past, prompt us to action through newer methods and research tools. Where are we in the whole scheme? Only the future will tell.

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J. Mabillon's *De re diplomatica libri VI* (1681)
DE
RE DIPLOMATICA
LIBRI VI.

IN QUIBUS QUIDQUID AD VETERUM
Instrumentorum antiquitatem, materiam, scripturam & stilum;
quidquid ad sigilla, monogrammata, subscriptiones ac notas
chronologicas; quidquid inde ad antiquarium, historicam, foren-
semque disciplinam pertinet, explicatur & illustratur.

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Sumtibus Caroli Robustel, via Jacoea, ad insigne
arboris Palmæ.

M. DCC. IX.

CUM PRIVILEGIO REGIS ET SUPERIORUM FACULTATE.

J. Mabillon’s De re diplomatica libri VI, Second edition (1709)