**Review and Opinion**

A review of the work of **Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov in his participation in the**  competition for associate professor in the Faculty of History, announced in the State Gazette issue 65 of 28 July 2023: 2.2. History and Archaeology (Medieval General History – The Western Model of Government in the Aegean – Franks and Venetians (XIII – XV Centuries).

For participation in the contest ch. ace. N. Dyulgerov presents mainly two monographs. The focus was on the first of these, entitled "The Western Model of Government in the Aegean – Franks and Venetians (XIII – XV Centuries)". The topic is extremely interesting, not only because it traces the stories of the Latin Empire and the small countries in the Peloponnese and on the islands, but also because it offers an opportunity for comparison between two types of statehood. That's what the candidate did very well. He noted the development of seignorial-vassal relations in the Constantinople Empire (however short it existed) similar to those in France. To consider, the nature of the government, the author examines in detail the functions of the management administration and concludes that it follows primarily Western models in which rarely appears any government office with a Byzantine name, rather as a demonstration of continuity than as a factual state. As for the Byzantine ceremonial, which has always both irritated and fascinated Western kings, it is received with all its pomp. Following medieval evidence, N. Dyulgerov successfully traces the differences in the functions and abilities of the Eastern Roman emperors and their successors on the throne of Constantinople, as well as their relations with the local population. Attempts to get closer to the Byzantine aristocracy began in the time of Henri, who in the name of good relations gave his daughter as wife to the Bulgarian nobleman Alexi Slav. However, deep civilizational differences, based primarily on faith, did not allow them to create better ties.

The other smaller country in the Balkans, whose rule follows the above model, is Morea. It’s first prince Guillaume de Champlitte obtained this title in an unclear way for us, but N. Dyulgerov makes a successful assumption that this happened through the blessing of the Pope and the help of the Thessaloniki ruler Boniface. He also held that Geoffroy de Villardouin had attained his position of power by election, and that hereditary law had already been established, which allowed the princes to rule as autonomous rulers. It is noteworthy that the institution of peers was established in Morea. Quite naturally, seignorial-vassal relations were established there, as well as a good military organization. Circumstances also necessitated more liberal relations with the local Byzantine aristocracy, much of which retained not only its privileges but also its lands.

The Venetian possessions have a different polity. They followed the model of an independent trading city, but those in the Eastern Mediterranean were not autonomous, but under the direct custody of Venice. Colonization was facilitated by the previously existing Venetian trading districts and the privileges gained during the Eastern Basileis. However, in the course of time, feudal dependencies were also created there, regardless of whether the lands were conquered or without gross coercion were handed over to the subjugation of the republic. In conclusion, N. Dyulgerov notes that starting from different positions, creating different opportunities, the rulers of Morea and the islands who remained for a longer time achieved a certain balance with the locals and this largely determined their specific fate.

Another book presented by N. Dyulgerov is "The Wars of Charlemagne". The topic is not surprising. Charlemagne is best known for his constant wars of aggression with all his neighbors. The text focuses on the organization of the army and combat techniques. It is a little difficult for me to accept his thesis about the Basques, but I agree wholeheartedly with what he said about his wars with the Avars.

In addition, our colleague, Dyulgerov, presents "The Anjou Possessions of the Balkans", a study that reveals the continuing links of the Italian south with the Balkans and 4 articles on similar topics and has a sufficient number of citations.

Nikola Dyulgerov is primarily a lecturer. He has lectures in Medieval General History in the subjects *history, r*egular and part-time, *Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Archival Studies and Documentary. The* themes of his courses are quite diverse – "Kingdom of France X-XV century", "War in Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean", "The Crusades", "The Principality of the Morse, the Latin "bastion" in the Balkans", "Building an Empire – in the footsteps of Charles d’ Anjou", "Italian Maritime Republics (IX-VI c.)", "Power, Institutions, Societies and Culture in Antiquity and the Middle Ages". In total, it represents over 1,000 hours of teaching activity. He also organizes and conducts field studies for students and scientific conferences.

Nikola Dyulgerov as well participates in projects financed by the state budget, operational programs and others. He is a member of the Association of Byzantinists and Medievalists in Bulgaria.

Everything said so far gives me every reason to recommend to the respected jury to award to Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov the scientific position "Associate Professor".

November 2023 prof. Krasimira Gagova

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