Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Faculty of History

Department "History of Bulgaria"

R E V I E W

On

the dissertation of

Ekaterina Krasimirova Angelova

on the subject: Ecclesiastical policy of Bulgaria between the union of Tsar Kaloyan and the restoration of the Bulgarian Patriarchate (1204-1235)

Scientific field: 2. Humanities, Professional area: 2.2: History and archaeology,

Scientific specialty: History of Bulgaria - medieval history of Bulgaria

By Prof. Dr. Alexandar Nikolov

SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of History

Department of Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History

**Data on the doctorate, dissertation, abstract and publications:**

The dissertation work of Ekaterina Krasimirova Angelova was discussed and proposed for public defense by the "History of Bulgaria" department at the Faculty of History of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". The procedure for announcing the public defense is fully in accordance with the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", as well as with the relevant provisions of the RSARB and the Regulations for its implementation.

The abstract (29 pages) fully meets the relevant requirements and gives a complete idea of ​​the content of the dissertation. The results of the "Anti-plagiarism" system convincingly prove the originality of the work. The text of the dissertation is accompanied by legal regulations and publications on the subject, which fully meet the requirements provided for in the law. Five published articles are indicated, the content of which is undeniably related to the content of the dissertation. Of these, one article is in print, the others have been published.

**Dissertation content:**

The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, two appendices, a bibliography (sources and literature) and a list of abbreviations. It contains a total of 179 pages.

**The introduction** represents a traditional review of the achievements of Bulgarian and world medieval studies on the subject up to now, and also outlines the goals and tasks of the present study, as well as the source base on which it is based. It is comprehensive enough and gives a clear idea of ​​the dissertation's goals.

**The first chapter** "Ecclesiastical policy of Tsar Kaloyan: the union of Bulgaria with the Church of Rome" is a detailed overview of the process of negotiations and conclusion of the union between the Church of Rome and Bulgaria. Of course, the main source on the subject, namely the famous Correspondence of Pope Innocent III with Tsar Kaloyan, is again examined in detail and analyzed here. However, the doctoral student has managed to present the topic in a broad political context, which also includes the complex military and diplomatic situation related to the Fourth Crusade - its preparation, conduct and results.

These events strongly influenced the process of negotiations between Bulgaria and the Church of Rome, and also had a serious impact on the relations between Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia, with dramatic events related to the struggle for the throne of the Serbian rulers taking place in the latter.

The doctoral candidate has singled out two sub-periods in her research, the first covering the time from December 1199 to November 1204, in which period the two countries established their initial contacts and gradually reached certain agreements in the conditions of growing tension in the international environment, and the second covers the time from the conclusion of the union until the death of the Bulgarian ruler, who entered into a fierce conflict with the newly formed Latin Empire and became the main threat to its existence, at least as far as its Balkan possessions were concerned. Ekaterina Angelova has managed to cope with the complicated political and church-state set of relations that gave the framework for relations between Bulgaria and the Papacy in the conditions of the already concluded union and the transformation of Bulgaria into a Uniate state seeking its place in the newly established order in the European Southeast.

**The second chapter**, entitled "Ecclesiastical Policy of the Bulgarian Tsardom under the successors of Tsar Kaloyan until the termination of the union with the Roman Church" traces the development of Bulgaria's relations with the Papacy, Hungary and the Latin Empire, as well as with its Orthodox neighbors namely Nicaea, Epirus and Serbia in terms of maintaining the union with Rome. Boril's relations with these neighbors and partners are carefully traced, and the increase in contacts with the Catholic world towards the end of his reign is noted.

The doctoral candidate supports the thesis that Boril is not a weak ruler, as traditionally described, and that he manages to maintain the state relatively well in a complicated international environment, skillfully using the fact that Bulgaria continued to adhere to the union. Special attention is paid to the Boril`s synodikon and to the policy of Tsar Boril towards the heretics, the conclusion being that regardless of the union, the Bulgarian Church remains faithful to the Byzantine church norms, a circumstance that derives to a large extent from the conditions of the union itself, which did not imply substantial changes regarding the dogma and rituals of the church. His successor, John Assen II, also skillfully took advantage of the Uniate status of Bulgaria and, managing not only to strengthen, but also to expand the positions of Bulgaria in South-Eastern Europe through clever diplomacy and delicate maneuvering between the Catholic and Orthodox blocs in the region.

**The third chapter** "The end of the union with the Roman Church" dwells in detail on the radical move of Tsar John Assen II, related to the end of the union, which became a burden for Bulgarian politics and church affairs, and the policy of restoring the autocephalous Bulgarian Patriarchate centered in Tarnovo, by which act the status of Bulgaria, inherited from the First Tsardom, was fully restored. The author also traces the policy of John Assen II after the Treaty of Lampsacus, which is distinguished by a firm adherence to the Orthodox course, regardless of some temporary changes in political orientation, caused by specific circumstances in the development of the situation in the European southeast.

**The conclusion** correctly presents the general conclusions of the doctoral student regarding this complex and still mysterious period in Bulgarian political and ecclesiastical history.

The work also includes **two appendices** - one dedicated to the relations between Bulgaria, the Roman Church and Serbia, and the other to the Bulgarian-Hungarian relations in the period, which were also influenced heavily through church politics. We must note that the two appendices are well-founded, present an interesting angle to the problem under consideration, and thus offer useful addition to the main part of the exposition.

The style of the work is very good, but it should be noted that, despite the visible efforts of the author, there are still some stylistic and grammatical inaccuracies, which are understandable when preparing a voluminous text. The necessary unification of personal names and some terms (for example, Baudouin I, but Baldwin II, Henrich and Henri de Hainault, etc.), which occur in different ways in the text, has not been carried out, and even the change in the sources and historiography used is clearly visible. There are other inaccuracies, such as the use of "Vatican" as a synonym for the Papacy.We should note that the Vatican complex became the residence of the popes about a century and a half later, and as the doctoral candidate correctly guessed elsewhere in the text, the residence of the popes then was at the Lateran Palace.

These minor remarks, however, in no way detract from the excellent overall impression of the work, and can be easily removed when presenting the text for printing.

**Conclusion:**

Based on what has been said so far, I recommend the esteemed commission to award the scientific and educational degree "doctor" to Ekaterina Krasimirova Angelova. Personally, I vote "yes" and send my congratulations to the doctoral candidate for the work performed in an excellent way.

27/04/2024 Reviewer:

Sofia /Prof. Dr. Alexandar Nikolov/

