**Review**

for the dissertation work of Ekaterina Krasimirova Angelova on the topic "Church policy of Bulgaria between the union of Tsar Kaloyan and the restoration of the Bulgarian Patriarchate (1204-1235)" with supervisor Assoc.Prof. Angel Nikolov, PhD for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree " Doctor" by professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, doctoral program "History of Bulgaria" - History of Medieval Bulgaria, department "History of Bulgaria", Faculty of History, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Ekaterina Angelova is a graduate of the Faculty of History of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski". After completing her BA studies in 2016, she began her MA studies (Fall 2016) in the Bulgarian Middle Ages: State, Society, Culture program. In 2020 by Order No. 20-159/24. 01. 2020 E. Mihailova was enrolled in full-time doctoral studies in professional direction 2.2. History and Archaeology, doctoral program "History of Bulgaria" - History of medieval Bulgaria at the "History of Bulgaria" department.

I have positive impressions of the doctoral student, acquired initially during her studies in the bachelor's specialization in Medieval Bulgarian History, and then in the above-mentioned master's program. The participation in various educational events related to delivering reports on certain topics, discussions and field practices showed her good opportunities for development in the field of Bulgarian medieval studies.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that the topic that became the subject of research in the dissertation is important for deepening the understanding of the development of relations between the state and the church in medieval Bulgaria during the rule of the first Asenevs. Therefore, in my opinion, her choice is a success for both the doctoral student and her supervisor, Assoc. Dr. A. Nikolov. Secondly, it is important to note that E. Angelova complied with some of the notes and recommendations made during the discussion of the work with the aim of admission to defense.

The doctoral dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, two appendices with a total volume of 179 pages.

In the Introduction (p. 3-20) the purpose, tasks and chronological scope of the dissertation are indicated. They are stated in several places in his exposition (p. 3-5), and not in a systematized form, which would help to highlight their significance even better. An overview of the sources and studies (Bulgarian and foreign) related to the topic of labor was made. The significance of the heterogeneous narrative and act material for its development is indicated. The information about the literature used shows the bibliographic awareness of the doctoral student. It is evident from the historiographic overview that E. Angelova has studied a significant volume of scientific literature. The contributions and weaknesses of a part of the studies, mainly belonging to foreign authors, in which issues of the church policy of Asenevtsi are examined, are indicated.

The doctoral student has made a successful attempt to follow the directions of the study of the problem of the relationship of Aseniv Bulgaria with Rome by Bulgarian public figures and scientists in a wide chronological scope, namely from the period of the Bulgarian Renaissance to today. However, when reviewing their works, only brief information is often resorted to, which in my opinion is insufficient. It would be good to enrich the assessment of them with a more in-depth analysis of their historiographical value in view of the topic of the dissertation work. In addition, there are gaps in the bibliographic references of some of the indicated and commented sources and studies (editions in which they were published, authors of the Bulgarian translations of some of the foreign historical works, etc., (p. 7, notes 12-15 ; p. 8, note 23, p. 10, note 36).

For me, the statement on p. 3 that during the period of Byzantine power "almost disappeared the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which from 927 onwards had the status of a patriarchate" remains unclear to me. Therefore, my question to the doctoral student is: what change occurs in her status after 1018?

In the First Chapter (p. 21-60) attention is directed to the ecclesiastical policy of King Kaloyan with the Roman Church in the period 1199-1207, as a means of achieving the international recognition of the Bulgarian kingdom, revived by his brother-kings Theodore Peter ( 1185-1190; 1196-1197) and Ivan Asen I (1190-1196). First of all, the relations between Tarnovo and Rome are analyzed, which began at the end of 1199, when Pope Innocent III sent his first letter to King Kaloyan, and ended with the conclusion of the union between Bulgaria and the Church of Rome in 1204. When clarifying the their character is briefly presented, the main principles of the papal theocracy, which were also guided by Innocent III in carrying out his policy with King Kaloyan. Against this background, the content of the above-mentioned first letter of the Pope to the Bulgarian ruler is analyzed. It is explained that this initiative of his is in harmony with the main goal of his policy for the accession of the Balkan countries states to Rome through union and their opposition to the Patriarchate of Constantinople during the deep crisis that gripped Byzantium at the end of the 12th century (pp. 21-24). Further, the negotiations between the two sides, which began in 1202, are followed in detail.

In this part, E. Angelova tries, in accordance with the purpose and tasks of her research, to highlight the importance of the union as a source of information for changing the rite existing until then in the Bulgarian church. In this conclusion, she refers to the correspondence between Archbishop Basil and Innocent III from 1203 to 1203, which deals with the pallium, vestments and accessories of the Bulgarian high priest (pp. 30-31). The issue of the titles and insignia of King Kaloyan, which are mentioned in the file, is discussed in detail. A critical attitude is expressed to the theses and hypotheses expressed by some foreign authors (A. Madzharu, B. Florya, G. Poskalski) in connection with the royal title requested by the Bulgarian ruler for himself and patriarchal dignity for his church leader (34-42 ).

The second main question, which is examined by the doctoral student in the First Chapter, concerns Bulgaria's relations with the Latin Empire between 1204-1207, which are closely related to the development of Bulgarian-Roman relations after the conclusion of the union in November 1204. Here it is relevant let us recall that these relations are also present as a theme in the correspondence between Kaloyan and Innocent III. The dissertation outlines the main events of the Fourth Crusade that led to the capture of Constantinople on April 13, 1204 by the knights. In this connection, the policy of King Kaloyan with the Crusaders and Byzantium during their advance towards the Byzantine capital between 1203-1204 and after its conquest with the Latin Empire is followed. The opinion of the doctoral student is interesting, that the union does not help to overcome the hostile relations between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire, which in fact lead to the strengthening of the Nicaean Empire (p. 50). The intervention of Pope Innocent III in Kaloyan's relations with the Latin Empire after the disastrous defeat of the knights on April 14, 1205 near Edirne is also commented on. This refers to his letters to the Bulgarian king and archbishop Basil, in which they insist on concluding peace between the two countries and on the release of Emperor Baldwin of Flanders, who was captured in the battle. They are rightly judged as evidence of the failure of Innocent III to bring Bulgaria permanently to the Church of Rome through the union (51-53). The question of the manner in which Boril is enthroned is also addressed. The doctoral student's opinion that the report of George Acropolitus, according to which Tsar Kaloyan was killed by a conspiracy, is contradictory is insufficiently substantiated. In my opinion, the circumstance indicated by her is unconvincing that in Byzantium during the monarchical coups "it was logical to explain every ruler's death as a result of a conspiracy" (p. 58).

When considering the Bulgarian-Latin relations in the context of the concluded union between Bulgaria and papal Rome, the promotion of Tsar Kaloyan to the defender of Orthodoxy is indicated. In this connection, I had the question why the doctoral student's comment left out his policy related to the rise of Tarnovo as a new center of Eastern Orthodoxy, reflected in the works of biographical literature and historical-apocalyptic literature.

At the end of the review of the Bulgarian-Latin relations, E. Angelova concludes that the union between Bulgaria and Rome was not only hierarchical, but also partly ritual in nature. In its support, she relies on several important archaeological testimonies, commented by A. Nikolov. These are three lead seals, belonging respectively to the Latin emperors Henri and Robert de Courtine of Tarnovo, and to Baldwin II, discovered in the Kailaka Park near Pleven among the ruins of a basilica from the 4th-6th centuries, where in the 12th-14th centuries there was an active necropolis. Archaeological materials from the XIII-XIV centuries from the same necropolis, as well as those from the fortress in Kailaka, suggest the existence of a settlement that has not yet been located (pp. 59-60).

In the second chapter, the ecclesiastical policy of the Bulgarian kingdom under the heirs of King Kaloyan is traced until the termination of the union with the Roman Church. It is analyzed in three main directions: 1) Bulgaria's relations with the Latin Empire, Nicaea and the West during the reign of Tsar Boril (1207-1218); 2) The council against the Bogomils of February 1211; 3) church policy under Tsar Ivan Asen II (1218-1241). Boril's enthronement, which, according to E. Angelova, took place through his marriage with the ex-wife of King Kaloyan, and not through the usurpation of royal power, was chosen as a starting point in the exhibition. In expressing this opinion, she adheres to the opinions expressed by Iv. Duychev and Iv. Bozhilov. The manifestations of political separatism, expressed in the secession of Kaloyan's other two nephews - despot Alexii Slav and Sevastocrator Strez - did not escape the attention of the doctoral student. Then we move on to the characteristics of Bogomilism, which during Boril's reign became stronger, and in order to strengthen the position of the Bulgarian church, he convened a council against the Bogomils.

The ecclesiastical policy of Tsar Boril is judged through Bulgaria's relations with Hungary and the Latin Empire. Her thesis is true that after 1213 he made peace with these Catholic states, so desired by Pope Innocent III, which was not achieved during the reign of King Kaloyan (p. 69). The question of the importance of the Lateran Council as the supreme expression of the Pope's policy regarding relations with the Orthodox East was raised. It is noted that there is no information about the participation of Bulgarian clerics at the council, including Archbishop Basil, although he was invited to attend the council through a circular letter sent to him by Innocent III. The assessment of Boril's ecclesiastical policy continues, by revealing the role of the council against the Bogomils (1211) and the Boril synod (pp. 77-87) as a means of establishing Orthodoxy in Bulgaria, although the union was not interrupted with the Roman Church. The activation of the Bogomil heresy during the reign of Boril is defined as an active religious factor in the XIII century.

Tsar Ivan Assen II's relations with Rome until the dissolution of the union in 1232 are analyzed in the context of his policies with Hungary, the Latin Empire, Nicaea, and Epirus (88-108). Emphasis is placed on his great victory over the Epirus ruler Theodore Konmin at the Battle of Klokotnitsa in 1230, which elevated the Bulgarian kingdom to a paramount power on the Balkan Peninsula. An essential consequence of it is the appointment of Bulgarian bishops in the newly annexed areas to Bulgaria in place of the bishops subject to the Roman Church.

In the Third Chapter (pp. 109-139), the focus is on the active policy of Tsar Ivan Asen II to establish Bulgaria as the main Orthodox power in the European Southeast. His relations with the "four empires", with Catholic Hungary and the papacy are under scrutiny. A major place further on in this third chapter is devoted to Bulgarian-Nicaea relations in the period 1231-1234, which ended with the conclusion of an alliance between the two countries and the resumption of the Bulgarian Patriarchate in 1235. They are presented in detail in the light of contemporary sources . The relationship between Rome and Nicaea and the efforts of Pope Gregory IX to return Tarnovo to the jurisdiction of Rome, which ended in vain, are also analyzed. The restoration of the Bulgarian Patriarchate (probably in Gallipoli, not in Lampsak) in 1235 is assessed by the doctoral student as the most important event in the church politics of Bulgaria during the reign of Ivan Asen II (p. 126).

His activity after 1235 is analyzed in detail in the light of the sources of the era. The borders of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo and the measures of the Bulgarian king to introduce Bulgarian church authority in the south-western regions annexed to Bulgaria after the battle of Klokotnitsa are indicated. At the end of the third chapter, the author's attention is directed to the joint actions of Bulgaria and Nicaea against the Latin Empire, regulated by the treaty of 1235. Against their background, the Bulgarian-Roman relations, which were renewed after the death of Emperor Jean de Brienne in March 1237. In this connection, the mutual efforts of both parties to start negotiations are commented on, as well as their failure due to their different interests in the Latin Empire. The changing nature of Tsar Ivan Asen II's foreign policy after 1237 is explained by his efforts to maintain the position of the Bulgarian kingdom as a first-class power without getting involved in conflicts with neighboring countries. A very good impression is made by the doctoral student's effort to update the information about the death of the Bulgarian king, attracting information about it in the rhyming chronicle of Philip Muskes and the "History" of Georgi Acropolitus, which were commented on by the Russian Byzantine scholar P.I. Zhavoronkov. She agrees with his opinion that Ivan Assen II died at the very end of 1241 or in the first half of 1242, not in June 1241.

In the Conclusion, E. Angelova summarizes the main results of her independent research. Its content could be enriched with a more in-depth summary of the factors (internal and external) that were decisive for the development of the ecclesiastical policy of the Bulgarian kingdom between the union with the Roman Church from 1204 until the resumption of the Bulgarian Patriarchate in 1235.

I appreciate the two appendices after the conclusion as a very good illustration of the papal policy regarding the Balkan states in the first half of the 13th century.

The abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation work.

Based on the above and regardless of the criticisms made, in my opinion the dissertation meets the formal legal requirements for protection. It can be seen that the doctoral student has developed certain professional skills and qualities during her studies in the third degree of higher education. All this allows me to give my positive vote for awarding the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" in professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (History of Bulgaria - History of Medieval Bulgaria) by EKATERINA KRASIMIROVA ANGELOVA.

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Sofia Prof. Dr. Miliyana Kaimakamova