

REVIEW

by

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of a dissertation work
for the acquisition of the educational and scholarly degree Doctor of Philosophy
(PhD)

in the Field of higher education 2. Humanities, Professional field 2.2. History
and Archaeology, Scholarly specialty General medieval history,

on the topic

**"Ethnic and Religious Identity in the Context of the Late Medieval Legal
System – the Periphery of the Latin West (13th–14th centuries)"**,
developed at the Faculty of History of St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia,
Department of Ancient History, Thracian Studies and Medieval History,

by PhD candidate **Tencho Pavlov Karagyozov**

I. Information on the Dissertation, Abstract, and Publications

Having familiarised myself with the dissertation submitted to me for evaluation, entitled **"Ethnic and Religious Identity in the Context of the Late Medieval Legal System – the Periphery of the Latin West (13th–14th centuries)"**, with the accompanying additional publications and the documentation presented within the procedure, including the scientometric report, I hereby declare that the doctoral candidate fulfils the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the *Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* (ADASRB) and Article 40, paragraph 3 of the *Regulations for the Implementation of the ADASRB* for the award of the educational and scholarly degree Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and that the dissertation possesses the qualities of an original scholarly work, with no indications of plagiarism.

The procedure opened for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” complies with the provisions of the ADASRB, the *Regulations for its Implementation*, and the *Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Award of Academic Degrees and the Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”*.

The text of the dissertation is written in an academic style, employs clear and precise language, and contains no significant orthographic or grammatical errors.

The submitted abstract, comprising 29 pages, accurately and analytically presents the content and the principal conclusions of the scholarly work and fully meets the requirements set out in the relevant laws and regulations.

In addition to the dissertation, the doctoral candidate, Karagyozev, has presented four further articles that correspond thematically to the dissertation. I shall therefore limit myself to the observation that these publications are characterised by originality and high scholarly quality.

II. Scholarly Contributions and Content of the Dissertation

1. General Characteristics and Topicality of the Subject

The dissertation “**Ethnic and Religious Identity in the Context of the Late Medieval Legal System – the Periphery of the Latin West (13th–14th centuries)**”, with a total length of 239 pages, follows a classical structure consisting of an introduction, four chapters, and a bibliography of sources and literature. The study addresses a highly topical and methodologically challenging issue: the construction, normative regulation, and social functioning of ethnic and religious identity in late medieval Europe, examined through the prism of the legal system and institutional practice. The topic integrates organically into contemporary historiographical debates on pre-modern identities, the role of law as a social regulator, and the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion within the community of Christians.

The choice of the periphery of the Latin West in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries – namely the Kingdom of Castile, the Kingdom of Hungary, and the

Anglo-Irish zone – as the analytical field is methodologically well justified and scientifically productive. It constitutes a significant contribution to current scholarship by overcoming the traditional centripetal focus on France, Italy, and the German lands. In the regions examined, law functions not only as an instrument of governance, but also as a mechanism for defining, categorising, and hierarchizing identities. The author convincingly demonstrates that it is precisely within these frontier spaces that the highest degree of normative sensitivity to religious and ethnic affiliation may be observed. Particularly commendable is the critical handling of the concept of “identity”, which is not employed anachronistically but is instead situated within the medieval discourse of gens, lex, and status.

A very positive impression is made by the balance achieved in the dissertation between the presentation and analysis of legal theory and social practice, which makes it possible to trace not only the normative model but also its actual functioning.

2. Source Base and Methodology

The dissertation is distinguished by a rich and diverse source base, selected with a high degree of scholarly precision. The author works confidently and competently with normative corpora (Fuero Juzgo, Fuero Real, Siete Partidas, etc.) and legal acts (royal privileges, charters, statutes), canon law texts, legal compilations, narrative sources, and administrative documentation, all employed critically and contextually.

The primary sources are analysed in their original languages, which attests to the author’s very good linguistic and source-critical training. The bibliography encompasses a wide range of classical and contemporary studies representing the major schools and interpretations within international historiography.

A particularly strong aspect of the study is its interdisciplinary approach, combining historical-legal analysis with concepts drawn from identity studies, historical anthropology, and social and cultural history.

The methodology employed is clearly formulated, consistently applied, and fully adequate to the research objectives set. The author makes extensive use of comparative analysis, juxtaposing different regional and legal contexts and tracing the variability of normative solutions and their dependence on local social and political environments.

3. Scholarly Contributions of the Dissertation

Among the most significant scholarly contributions of the dissertation are the following:

1. The successful implementation of a comparative analysis of peripheral legal systems, revealing patterns of flexibility and pragmatism absent from the central regions.

2. The formulation of a typology of legal regimes of identity on the periphery of the Latin West, with potential applicability beyond the specific chronological framework examined.

3. The demonstration of the dynamic character of identity, shaped by legal status, economic function, and political interest.

4. The tracing of the emergence of a collective Irish identity within a conflictual legal space, in which English law functions as a marker of political and cultural domination.

5. The conceptualisation of the frontier as a legal and symbolic space in which power is legitimised through normative differentiation between “insiders” and “outsiders”, clearly illustrated by the Castilian material.

6. The introduction of a new analytical perspective that combines the study of normative texts with the practice of law enforcement.

Alongside the indisputable scholarly merits of the dissertation, several critical remarks should be noted. These are of a recommendatory rather than a principled nature and do not affect the overall positive evaluation of the study.

1. Structurally, the work is logically organised; however, in certain sections a degree of repetition in the argumentation may be observed, which could be reduced in a future publication in favour of a more concise exposition.

2. A broader incorporation of the canon-law perspective might be considered, particularly with regard to religious identity.

These remarks do not diminish the scholarly value of the research, but rather outline possible directions for its further development and publication.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be stated unequivocally that the dissertation “Ethnic and Religious Identity in the Context of the Late Medieval Legal System – the Periphery of the Latin West (13th–14th centuries)” constitutes an independent, original, and methodologically sound scholarly study. It demonstrates excellent theoretical preparation, competent orientation in the source material, and the ability for independent scholarly work, critical thinking, and the formulation of generalisations of high academic value.

I consider that the dissertation fully meets the requirements of the *Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* and the regulations for its implementation. On this basis, I give a positive evaluation and propose to the esteemed academic jury that the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” be awarded to the doctoral candidate Tencho Pavlov Karagyozov in Professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, Scholarly specialty General medieval history, voting firmly in favour.

Desember 30, 2025
V. Tarnovo

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(Assoc. Prof. Nadezhda Hristova)