

Review

by Prof. I. Popova, Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski"

on the dissertation of Tencho Pavlov Karagyozov, regular doctoral student at the Department "Ancient History, Thracology, and Medieval History," on the topic of *Ethnic and Religious Identity in the Context of the Late Medieval Legal System – the Periphery of the Latin West (13th–14th Centuries)* in Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, (Medieval General History – Medieval Pre-modern Identities in Western and Central Europe)

Firstly, I must note that the procedure followed by the doctoral candidate Tencho Karagyozov complies with the requirements of the relevant legal acts. The dissertation presented meets the minimum national requirements, and the topic discussed is original and relevant. I have followed Tencho Karagyozov's academic development since his bachelor's degree, as he was a specialist in Medieval History and a master's student in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. I carefully reviewed the text and can confidently state that the work is of exceptional quality and value.

It consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, sources, and literature, totaling 245 pages, but due to the compact font, the actual study is over 300 standard pages long.

I would like to emphasize that the work is devoted to an important issue that has not yet been the subject of independent and targeted research in Bulgarian medieval studies. A wealth of source and historiographical material has been studied. The study is based on a wide range of primarily legal sources, which allow the author to reach in-depth conclusions.

In the introduction, T. Karagyozov clearly states his research objectives: "To examine the concept of ethnicity and its application in the medieval context of the 13th–14th centuries by analyzing key ethnological terms, phenomena, and events in order to establish similarities and differences with modern definitions; To study how medieval societies located on the periphery of the Latin West (using the examples of Castile, Ireland, and Hungary) in the 13th–14th centuries, in an ethnic and religious context, and how these identifications influenced the relationships between different cultures, groups, and individuals; Tracking the relationship between ethnic processes and law and how this law shapes the boundaries between different communities and how perceptions of ethnic and religious identity lead to a reformulation of legal discourse.

I congratulate him on his choice of research methodology, namely case studies, which enables him to achieve the objectives of his research. The introduction provides a source and historiographical overview of both the literature providing the theoretical basis for the dissertation and the sources and historiography used for the individual case studies devoted to Castile, Ireland, and Hungary.

In the first chapter, devoted to Theoretical Approaches to the Concept of Ethnic and Religious Identity, the doctoral student traces in depth the various schools of historiography and the different theoretical models and concepts; clarifies the basic concepts with which he works (race, people, ethnicity, identity, etc.) and presents an in-depth analysis of ethnicity in medieval studies, examining the debate on medieval ethnogenesis between the two schools – *Vienna* and *Toronto*, without neglecting to explore the issue of borders and border societies as a theoretical problem, as well as the relationship between borders and ethnicity in the Middle

Ages. All this enables him to construct a common theoretical framework that unites the separate research traditions, allowing him to achieve the objectives of the study.

Karagyozov highlights the interconnection between ethnic and religious identity, which is why he examines them in parallel in his study. I can only congratulate the author on the depth of his theoretical preparation, which is clearly evident from the text.

The second chapter is devoted to the first "case" – the Kingdom of Castile. The place of ethno-religious communities in the Castilian legal system and the attitude of the central authority towards them is examined within the framework of two distinct sub-periods, each with its own specific characteristics. The first period covers the time from the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 to the beginning of the reign of King Alfonso XI in 1312. At the beginning of the chapter, a critical reading and assessment of the term "*convivencia*" is made, noting the criticism of this concept and the emergence of similar categories such as *coexistencia*. The doctoral student acknowledges the important role of the border as a strategic tool in the policy of the Castilian monarchs towards ethno-religious communities. A product of this policy was the practice of granting the so-called *fueros* and the formation of parallel structures of government for Muslims and Jews.

The doctoral student rightly concludes that "although Jews and Muslims have distinctive *fueros* and pacts, royal law tends to view them as two sides of the same problem: religious and ethnic minorities who are supposed to be taxed and organized in a similar way in order to be protected, but also exploited." The emergence of *aljamas*, which represent parallel structures of governance for Muslims and Jews, has also been studied, as they serve as legal models within which Muslim and Jewish communities are recognized by Christians in the respective local context. (p. 86)

The doctoral student emphasizes that during the 12th–13th centuries there was a deliberate push for legal provisions, both secular and canonical, that further fixed the status of Muslims and Jews in Christian society, within which "the organization of their communities underwent a process of 'Christianization' and formalization." The reform program of King Alfonso X (1252–1284) is also examined in detail, which led to the codification of Castilian laws in *El Espéculo*, *Fuero Real*, and *Siete Partidas* and the emergence of a clearly defined Castilian identity that functions and exists in contact with "others" (pp. 90–99). The importance of *Siete Partidas* is very accurately assessed not only as a means of "standardizing legal practices in the kingdom, but also as an instrument for maintaining social norms and relations between different ethno-religious groups" (p. 98).

The ethnic and religious identity of Jews and Muslims was recognized by acknowledging them as legal subjects of the kingdom, whose lives were governed by their own laws and religion. The existence of a constructed "distinctive Castilian identity, which seems to have taken on an even more distinct form in the mid-13th century" (p. 93) is also noted, with the Castilian language and the idea of *patria* being identified as its hallmarks.

The author analyzes in detail the next period of the Castilian "case," pointing out that the accession of Alfonso XI to the throne in 1312 effectively ended the policy pursued until then towards ethno-religious communities, framed by the state of *convivencia* and *coexistencia* in Castilian society (p. 103). The doctoral student draws attention to the fact that the Cortes began to play an increasingly important role in state affairs, which led to the growing significance of

their decisions regarding the organization of individual ethno-religious communities. The decrees passed by the Cortes in Palencia (1286) and Valladolid (1293 and 1312) outlined a line of closer intervention in the internal affairs of individual communities (p. 101).

The violation of the *modus vivendi* in the period from 1312 to the Laws of Aragon of 1412 is examined in detail, with special attention paid to the reign of Alfonso XI (1312–1350) and legal unification. The change in policy towards Jews and Muslims is reflected in the sessions of the Cortes during the reign of Alfonso XI and is in the context of the general "discourse of exclusion" in the Latin West. This policy was also pursued during the reign of King Pedro I (1350–1369), whose name is associated with the implementation of a series of measures that isolated Jews and Muslims and redefined their place in Castilian Christian society (pp. 109–111). His reign created the conditions for an intensification of ethnic and religious tensions, which manifested themselves much more clearly during the reigns of the first two representatives of the Trastámara dynasty – Enrique II (1369–1379) and Juan I (1379–1390) (pp. 111–117).

T. Karagoyozov points to the trend toward cultural homogeneity, which increasingly highlights the emergence of elements of discrimination, isolation, exclusion, and crisis in the nature of relations between Christians, Jews, and Muslims. He correctly concludes that this crisis also affects the legal system, which is subject to change with the passage of the so-called Aylon Laws of 1412, which put an end to their legal and judicial autonomy, restricting their economic function and social mobility, as well as regulating external ethnic characteristics (pp. 119-123).

At the end of the chapter, the conclusions reached on the basis of in-depth analysis are summarized.

The third chapter is devoted to the Lordship of Ireland. Here again, the ethnic conflict between the English and the Irish is examined in two periods, in which the law and its application once again play an important role. The first period is from 1204 to 1307 and covers the reign of King John (1199-1216), tracing the conflicts between English settlers and local Irish, as well as the Anglicization of church dioceses.

During King John's reign, English positions in the Irish territories were consolidated, which was associated with the establishment of "an administrative organization and the creation of a judicial system based on English law and statutes." The doctoral student correctly notes that during John's reign, the main structural features and basic administrative structures of *Communitas Hibernie* were formed. Soon after, it became an arena of conflict between the Irish and the English, who manifested themselves as bearers of distinct ethnic identities. Attention is drawn to the fact that with the accession of Edward I (1272–1307) to the English throne, negative trends began to emerge in the overall development of the lordship.

It is correctly noted that the overall program of anglicization of church dioceses led to one of the first serious ethnic conflicts between the two communities in the formed *communitas Hibernie*, namely the so-called "Melifont conspiracy" (1216–1231) (p. 134). The doctoral student correctly notes that the reign of King Henry III (1216–1272) marked the final imposition of the English legal model in the development of the lordship and concludes that by the end of the 13th century English law finally began to be regarded as one of the distinctive features of so-called Englishness and as an integral part of English political culture (131 pp.).

The second period examined in the Irish case covers the time from the end of Edward I's reign to the reaffirmation of the so-called Kilkenny Statutes in 1402. The collapse of the established *modus vivendi* during the reign of Edward I (1272–1307) is presented in depth. The conclusion is drawn that the law firmly delineates the boundaries of the two separate ethnic communities, both at the individual and collective levels (p. 138). Based on his analysis, the author concludes that by the beginning of the 14th century, clear lines of ethnic division were already in place, creating a fragmented ethnic and political space (p. 141).

Looking in detail at the second period of the Irish case from 1307 to 1402, Karagyozev notes the signs of destabilization that manifested themselves during the short-sighted rule of King Edward II (1307–1327). He focuses on the Remonstrance to the Pope of 1317, noting its role in further exacerbating ethnic tensions between the Irish and the English (p. 146). He dwells on the Counter-Remonstrance of 1328 and the crisis of 1341–1342, as well as on the Kilkenny Statutes of 1366, reconfirmed in 1402. The doctoral student concludes that the passage of the legal provisions in the Kilkenny Parliament in 1366 was a direct response to the progressive loss of English identity among the settlers in the colony and their acculturation into the Irish environment (p. 157) and that the purpose of the Kilkenny Statutes was to impose English culture on the Anglo-Irish, thus ensuring the preservation of their ethnic identity (p. 158). He determines that the ban on the use of the Irish language among the inhabitants of the lordship, threatening English identity and accelerating their acculturation, is also of essential importance (p. 159). At the end of this chapter, the doctoral student summarises his conclusions, stating that "the vision of an English spatial identity or geographical space inhabited by a homogeneous group emerges". I agree with his conclusion that English law thus plays "the role of an instrument of resistance or mobilization for marginalized groups, as well as a means that can promote social cohesion or create barriers to integration" (p. 170).

The last fourth chapter is devoted to the Kingdom of Hungary, which was home to communities of Jews, Muslims, Saxons, Székelys, and Cumans. Their relations with the central authority in the kingdom are again examined in two periods – the first is from the beginning of King Andrew II's reign in 1205 to the fall of the Árpád dynasty in 1301, and the second coincides with the reign of the Anjou dynasty until 1395. This chapter initially analyzes the ethno-religious communities of Muslims and Jews and the Golden Bulls of 1222 and 1231, as well as the "Oath of Bereg" (1233). At the beginning of the 13th century, both Jews and Muslims found their place in the structure of the hierarchical Christian society, having their own legal models around which their religious and ethnic affiliation was preserved, provisions reflected in the legal documents of the Hungarian kingdom. The Oath of Bereg, influenced by the papacy, led to restrictions on social interaction between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The issue of the Saxon community, whose presence in the kingdom was regulated by the Diploma Andreanum of 1224, was examined in detail. The doctoral student rightly notes that the document outlines the boundaries of a separate social space, constituted as a county, specifically for settlers, within which they receive certain rights, but also obligations. In this way, the Hungarian king contributed to the transformation of the Saxon communities into a separate ethno-regional group with its own autonomy (p. 180). The development of the Szekler community and that of the Cumans is also traced, examining the process of Christianization among the Cumans and the close ties between the Cuman ethnic community and the Hungarian state. The doctoral student reaches the correct conclusions that, in practice, after the conversion of the Cumans and their placement in the service of the crown, they gradually acquired "a

collective legal status that was highly dependent on the monarch." Similar to the Szeklers and Saxons, they "formed a unique community with legal autonomy and became part of the legal structures of the kingdom. As hospites, they had no other protector than the royal authority, whose expectations they had to fulfill" (186 p.). From a legal point of view, relations were regulated by the so-called Cumanian Laws of 1279. They forced the Cumans to settle down and abandon their nomadic way of life, as a result of which their settlements, which played the role of nuclei of distinctive ethnic identity, became established in a foreign environment, creating conditions for acculturation and assimilation (188 p.). The community of the Szeklers, which enjoyed a distinctive legal status concentrated in the so-called Terra Siculorum, also underwent a stage of legal integration. The institutionalization of their territory coincided with the formation of Terra Saxonum for the Saxons, whose rights and privileges were reconfirmed by the decrees of Andra. The institutionalization of their territory coincided with the formation of Terra Saxonum for the Saxons, whose rights and privileges were reaffirmed by the decrees of Andrew III in 1291 and 1292.

I fully agree with T. Karagyozov's conclusion that during the second period, the policy of the new Angevin rulers, most clearly represented by Charles Robert (1308–1342) and Louis I the Great (1342–1382), towards the Szeklers, the Saxons, and the Yases was "a clear example of continuity in the attitude towards the ethnic 'other'. Both the Szeklers and the Saxons retained their distinctive collective legal status and continued to enjoy autonomy within the Terra Siculorum and Terra Saxonum" (p. 202). He also notes the changes under the new dynasty regarding the Jewish and Muslim communities, which marginalized the Jews, while the Muslim communities were closely integrated into the Hungarian habitus (p. 205).

In his conclusion, doctoral student T. Karagyozov summarizes the main conclusions on the topic of ethnic and religious identity and its treatment within the late medieval legal system. In line with the objectives of the dissertation, he provides a summary analysis of the individual cases.

I fully agree with the author's opinion that the historical development of Castile, Ireland, and Hungary in the 13th–14th centuries clearly shows the importance of ethnicity as a means of maintaining a certain identity and creating a sense of belonging to a particular community. All three state structures, located on the periphery of the West, are characterized by the multicultural nature of their societies. I also support his conclusion that the ethno-religious identities in Castile, Ireland, and Hungary are not the result of living in isolation, but exist on the basis of social interaction across borders. In all three cases, the border is key to the processes of ethno-religious identification and self-realization.

The sources and literature used in the development of the dissertation are impressive.

The scientific contributions of the dissertation can be summarized as follows: the main contribution is the presentation of a detailed analysis of a topic that has not been addressed by Bulgarian medieval studies to date. Other contributions of the dissertation can also be noted: it introduces scientific research and primary sources unknown to Bulgarian historiography into scientific use; it provides a new reading of legal documents through the prism of identity formation; it provides new empirical data for understanding the essence of ethnic and religious identity in late medieval legal culture; prepares a methodologically innovative analysis and uses an interdisciplinary approach, combining theoretical concepts from the fields of sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, and history; uses the so-called "case study"

method, which allows, on the basis of several specially selected cases, to formulate generalizations and conclusions that create a more complete picture of the ethnic phenomenon in pre-modern societies; attempts to provide answers to the ongoing scientific debate on whether categories such as ethnicity, nationality, and race can be applied to the medieval period; challenges the application of contemporary concepts of ethnicity, nationality, and race to the study of medieval societies, examining identity as it was understood within the specific cultural, legal, and social frameworks of the Latin West in the 13th and 14th centuries.

The abstract meets the requirements, the publications are on the topic of the dissertation and have been published in prestigious scientific journals and collections.

Based on all of the above, I would like to express my positive opinion on the awarding of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" to Tencho Karayozov and wish him future creative success.

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