

## REVIEW

for the dissertation of Angel Orbetsov "BULGARIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS FROM THE LIBERATION UNTIL THE END OF THE 50S OF THE XX CENTURY" with supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeri Kolev

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The presented work contains Introduction pp. 4 - 10, Introductory part pp. 10 - 115, eight chapters pp. 115 - 377, Conclusion, Bibliography and Appendices. It has a respectable volume of 404 pages without applications, and with them it grows to 433 pages. Such a volume significantly exceeds the requirements for the award of the scientific-educational degree "Doctor" and is a certificate for the large-scale research.

No less impressive is the volume of literature used in the Bibliography. It is ingeniously divided into five sections. The first section contains the discovered and processed archival documents. There are 350 of them from the Central State Archives alone. There are also archival documents from the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius". 70 manuscripts have been examined from the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iran. Such search and research work is indisputable proof of the serious and thorough approach of the doctoral student. The second section includes published documents, reference, memoirs, educational, fiction and religious literature, albums, atlases and almanacs - a total of 41 items. In the third section are the periodicals - 24 issues. The fourth section lists the scientific literature used - 138 titles in four languages: Bulgarian, English, Russian and Persian. I emphasize Persian because it is very important for the researcher to use freely and work with the language of the country he is studying. The fifth section contains electronic publications in more than eight languages: Bulgarian, English, Russian, Persian, German, French, Swedish, Turkish - a total of 24 electronic titles. Among them, 67 separate articles are listed as processed by Wikipedia alone.

I consciously emphasize the literature mentioned in the Bibliography, because in its predominant part it is organically woven into the fabric of the dissertation and illustrates the profound approach of the dissertation to the scientific and creative task. I have a reserved attitude only towards the name of Petar Dobrev in the Bibliography who does not enjoy sufficient authority among our scientific circles. The same is true of several references to his writings.

The 13 applications of Persian, Bulgarian and one Yugoslav archival documents are significant contributions to the dissertation shedding light on the contacts between Shah's Iran and the Principality of Bulgaria. Of particular value are three of the four Persian documents discovered by Angel Orbetsov, which testify to the establishment of relations between the two countries at the highest level. The applications fit extremely well into the development concept. They are an integral part of it and in most cases presuppose the direction of research. The translation of the discovered documents is also a testament to the doctoral student's high level of language, because translating a Persian manuscript from nearly 140 years ago is not an easy task. Here I will note the correctness of Angel Orbetsov, who did not forget to mention the name of the Iranian scientist who helped him with the translation.

About the content of the presented dissertation:

The achieved balance between the separate chapters is impressive. This is an evidence of the good methodological guidance of Assoc. Prof. Valeri Kolev, under which Angel Orbetsov has worked. In the Introduction, the doctoral student convincingly argues the reasons why he has started his research. He is familiar with what has been done before him, but also with the many white spots in this area. The Introduction also explains the principles - chronological and thematic, in accordance with which the work is structured. This part sets out the goals and objectives of the work, as well as the methodology used.

The introductory part 10 - 114 pages is especially important for orienting the reader in the topic and its background. There is still no serious Bulgarian study of the history of Iran. A few years ago, two translated titles by two French authors appeared on our book market: Yves Porter - "Iranians, the History of a Nation"

and Jean Paul Roux - "History of Iran and the Iranian People". However, both editions do not differ in depth of analysis, with coverage and understanding of the processes taking place below the surface of events. They present in chronological order only the most important events in the history of the Iranian people. While what Angel Orbetsov offers us in the Introductory part of the doctoral thesis I would recommend to be expanded and published in a separate volume dedicated to the history of a 25-century statehood.

At first glance, compared to the total volume of the dissertation exceeding 400 pages, the Introductory part of 104 pages seems to be larger than necessary. In my opinion, however, the size of this part, and of course its content, comes to show with which country Bulgaria has established diplomatic contacts - with a country with over 25 centuries of history, with a country bearing imperial greatness, with a country inheriting a rich cultural and spiritual tradition.

The first chapter pp. 115 - 151 is devoted to the contacts of the Bulgarian and Iranian missions in Constantinople, the establishment of the first Iranian consulate in Bulgaria and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. A curious moment in our relations is also mentioned - the transit of the Iranian monarch Mozafareddin Shah through Bulgaria and his brief meetings with our high-ranking state and army officials.

The second chapter, pp. 152-179, deals with the difficulties in mutual relations during the war years 1912-1918.

The third chapter, pp. 180 - 213, focuses on the growing interest of the Bulgarian side in Iran.

Chapter four, pp. 214 - 243 deals with the same period as Chapter Three, but the emphasis is on trade, cultural and scientific contacts between the two countries.

Chapter five, pp. 244-272 is devoted to the first Bulgarian diplomatic mission in Tehran and its active work both among political circles and among the Bulgarian émigré community in Iran.

Chapter six, pp. 273-306 deals with the years after 1941, when the two countries severed diplomatic relations and were forced to seek the assistance of the Swedish missions in Tehran and Sofia to resolve issues.

Chapter seven, pp. 307-349 focuses on the Cold War and attempts to restore diplomatic relations between Iran and Bulgaria.

Chapter eight, pp. 350-376 is devoted to the interaction between the two countries in the field of economy, culture, sports and others. Special attention is paid to the production of "Persian" carpets in our country.

An important detail, emphasizing the serious scientific approach of the doctoral student is the fact that in each chapter very precise findings and summaries are made, logical conclusions are drawn, which are collected in the Conclusion.

After all, what are the brightest characteristics of the presented work?

The doctoral student's ability to detect, point out and characterize a process is very impressive. He explores it in depth, with scientific scrupulousness and inner charge.

A distinctive feature of this work is its polyvalence. It develops not only historical topics, but also social sciences, cultural studies, linguistics, literature, sociology. Topics in the field of diplomacy, ethnology, archaeology, geography, archivist, economics, sociology, religion are presented. All this gives the work an interdisciplinary, I would even say encyclopedic character. Dignity, which is very rare in this type of study.

Another main feature of the work is the relevance of the chosen topic. To date, there is no comprehensive study of the problem in our country or in Iran, which gives the presented work a high degree of innovation.

The good structuring of the selected material is essential for the achievement of the set research task. The conclusions at the end of each chapter are naturally systematized, reasoned, and therefore convincing.

The author's style is concise, clear, with a logical sequence of judgments, cleared of patterns and stencils. The scientific and conceptual apparatus is at a very high level. Each element of the work is carefully examined and developed professionally, and this visibly affects the study.

A successful solution is to transcribe Persian titles in Cyrillic, rather than Latin as before.

For me, the work has a significant contribution, referred to the history of Bulgarian-Iranian diplomatic relations and their beginning. In this sense, it will be an important document for rethinking the starting date of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iran and Bulgaria.

The work will be useful for diplomats, historians, social scientists, for students majoring in Iranian Studies, History, International Relations, as well as for a wide readership.

There are no traces of incorrect use of foreign scientific works and research in the dissertation.

In view of the above, I am convinced that the presented dissertation "BULGARIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS FROM LIBERATION TO THE END OF THE 50s OF THE XX CENTURY" has all the merits of a serious scientific study, therefore I recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award Angel Oretsov the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"!

I also propose to the attention of the esteemed Scientific Jury a draft decision on the dissertation work of Angel Orbetsov to be published in a separate book body.

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