**REVIEW**

**for the scientific works of Senior Assistant Prof. Dr. Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov,**

**2. Humanities, 2.2. History and Archaeology (Medieval History - The Western Model of Government in Aegean - Franks and Venetians of the 13th - 15th centuries), announced in State Gazette No. 65/28.07.2023.**

**Reviewed by Prof. Ivayla Popova, Sofia University.**

**- Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements**

The procedure and the resulting requirements under the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of the Sofia University have been complied with, as is evident from the documentation submitted. On my perusal of its contents, I found no violations. I can stress that the minimum national requirements for the post of Associate Professor have been fulfilled.

**- Education**

Nikola Dyulgerov graduated in History from Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski” in 2002 with specialization in the Department of “History of Byzantium and the Balkan Peoples”, after which he obtained a master's degree again at the Faculty of History at Sofia University, with the subject of his thesis *Valona and its adjacent territories at the border between two eras (14 - early 16th century)*. In 2007 he received his PhD with a dissertation on the “Dominions of the Angevin dynasty in the Balkans” which was published as a monograph in 2021 in the University Press of the University of Sofia. The teaching activity of the Dr. Nikola Dyulgerov started in 2006 as a teacher in history at the IX French Language School "Alphonse de Lamartine". Since 2010 Dr. Dyulgerov has been a full-time lecturer at Sofia University, Faculty of History, Department of Ancient History, Thracian Studies and Medieval History, where he successfully continues his scientific activity.

**- Research activities, results and contributions**

Nikola Dyulgerov participated in the current competition for Associate Professor with two monographs ("**The Western Model of Government in Aegean - Franks and Venetians (XIII - XV centuries**)", Sofia, 2023, and "**The Wars of Charlemagne**", Sofia, 2022), three articles and one study, all published in refereed journals and collections.

The submitted habilitation thesis with the title “*The Western Model of Government in Aegean - Franks and Venetians (XIII - XV centuries)*”, published by the University Press at Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski”, I read very carefully and I can say that I am very impressed. I would like to emphasize that the work is devoted to an important issue, which has not been the subject of focused research in Bulgarian, and not only Bulgarian, scientific works. Its preparation is the result of a long and thorough research work carried out by Nikola Dyulgerov, as evidenced by the rich source material used by the author.

The study is based on sources diverse in type and origin - among them are the works of the chroniclers of the Fourth Crusade such as Geoffroy de Villeharduin and Robert de Clary, also Henri de Valenciennes, whose work is a kind of continuation of Villeharduin’s; documents on the commerce and history of Venice, published in the three-volume edition of Tafel and Thomas; the Regests of the Latin Emperors in Constantinople, edited by Hendricks; papal registers and papal bulls; the Regests of Documents of the Venetian Senate, and the Délibérations des assemblées vénitiens concernant la Romanie, edited by F. Thierry; the two-volume edition of Thomas and Predelli's Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum; the Assizes of Romania; the Monumenta Peloponesiaca, edited by J. Chrysostomides; the Chronicle of Morea in its four versions – French, Greek, Aragonese, and Italian, and many other sources.

The monograph is considerable in length - 450 pages and includes an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, sources and literature used and an appendix with maps.

The first chapter, entitled *The Creation and Political Development of the Latin Empire*, in several subchapters examines in detail the situation in the empire before the appearance of the Latins in the Balkans and the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade. The first subchapter examines the situation in Byzantium in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. It traces the changes that took place in Byzantium during the reign of the Comnenian dynasty, the entry of the provincial aristocracy, and the empire's approach to the Western European model of development. The second part of chapter one is devoted to the Creation of the Latin Empire, focusing on the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade.

I fully agree with the author that instead of a feudal empire, the Latin Empire *was more like a conglomerate of Latin dominions of different status, which were only nominally subordinate to Constantinople. In this respect they resembled the heavily militarized crusader states of the Middle East* (p. 40). The third part of chapter one traces the political development of the Latin Empire during the period of its existence from 1205 to 1261; of course, the Byzantine states (Epirus and Nicaea) that fought for the restoration of Byzantium are examined in parallel. The fourth part of chapter one explores the establishment and political development of the Principality of Morea up to the 15th century. It examines the system of dual vassalage in the person of Guillaume de Villeharduin, both vassal of the Latin emperor in Constantinople and of the Venetian Republic. By the treaty of 1209. Venice retained under its authority the ports of Modon and Coron, as well as the right of free trade throughout the Peloponnese. Villeharduin in turn received legitimation of his authority from Venice, over territory belonging to the Republic itself. The prince also secured military support from the mighty Venetian navy (p. 65). The author traces the transfer of power in the Morea from the Villeharduins to the Angevins (the treaties of Viterbo of 1267 are discussed, by which de facto power subsequently passed into the hands of Charles d'Anjou (pp. 71-72)), the problems of the Catalan campaign in the early 14th cent, the Navarrese campaign, and reaches the correct conclusions that *the last century of the existence of the once stable and wealthy principality of Achaea passed under the sign of numerous internal conflicts caused by the unsettled succession rights to titles and fiefs in Morea and Naples* (85 p.). I fully share the author's view that the new Italian noble families, which gradually took the place of the old crusading ones, *failed to preserve the modus vivendi established under the* Villeharduins *with the local Greek archons* (p. 85). The Angevin suzerainty weakened, and in the 1480s it became completely nominal, leading also to the destruction of the princedom by the Byzantines from Mystras in 1430 and subsequently to the conquest of the whole Peloponnese by the Ottomans a few decades later.

The second chapter of the monograph under review is entitled *The Structure and Functioning of the Latin Empire (Imperial Domain)*. It is also divided into subchapters, these are Governance in Latin Romagna, Feudalisation in the Imperial Domain, The Church, The Army and Military Organisation, Relations between Latins and Natives in the Imperial Domain.

In the first part of this chapter the author traces in detail the procedure of the election and the development of the title of the Latin emperors in Constantinople. Dyulgerov rightly concludes that *the title of the Latin rulers in Constantinople contained both specifically Byzantine elements, intended to show continuity with the Byzantine emperors, and common formulas with those of the Western monarchs* (90 p.). The author discusses in detail the system of succession in the Latin Empire and comes to the correct conclusion that the *seigniorial-vassal relations characteristic of Western Europe, and France in particular, as well as the specific way in which the new state structure was established, narrowed the rights of its ruler and determined to a large extent his behavior* (98 p). Dyulgerov discusses at length the important question of the division of the territories of the former Byzantine Empire among the Crusaders, the *Partitio Romaniae*, and the distribution of shares among the participants in the campaign, the Crusaders, the Venetians, and the emperor, but as is well known, much of this land had yet to be conquered from the Byzantines. Dyulgerov concludes correctly that Latin rulers oriented themselves towards measures typical of Western feudal society in order to expand their influence in the empire. *One of these ways was the enlargement of the domain itself* (p. 105). Another way to increase the influence and power of emperors outside their own domain *was to bind large feudal lords to a vassal oath to the monarch* (p. 107). The author also discusses at length the powers of the Latin emperor vis-à-vis the Church. He comes to the correct conclusion that the Latin emperors, unlike the Byzantine vassal-elevators, did not have a strong influence over the Church and its affairs (pp. 111-118). The author also examines in detail the financing and administrative and palace offices in the newly formed empire of the Bosphorus.

The monograph continues with a thorough analysis of the feudal character of the empire, truthfully noting that the settlement of the crusaders in Aegean led to the introduction of feudal relations in Latin Romagna. Territories were divided into fiefs and distributed to the participants of the campaign according to their contribution to the expedition. The Latins transferred into them the personal oaths, rights and duties of vassals and seigniors, typical of Western Europe. Problems are also noted, such as the fact that a large part of the lands was never conquered and the fiefs existed only on paper. In not a few of them Latin rule was never established, and elsewhere it was briefly imposed (p. 173). In a subsequent sub-chapter the researcher traces the role of the Papacy and the Church in general in the newly conquered territories. The author rightly observes that in *organizing the religious structure of the Latin Empire Rome was guided by two principles: the preservation of the old ecclesiastical provinces and the subordination of the Holy See* (pp. 177-178). Pope Innocent III's pragmatic policy towards Greek priests and monks, continued by some of the subsequent popes, is correctly recognized.

On the basis of a thorough analysis Nikola Dyulgerov makes a magnificent exposition on the army and military organization, tracing its development. The author reaches the correct conclusions *that all the forces with which the Constantinopolitan rulers deployed permanently or temporarily proved insufficient for the defense of Romagna. Even in its most stable period, under Henri de Hainaut, it needed money and more soldiers to cope with its adversaries. This need, ..., became one of the main problems of Latin Romagna* (p. 196).

Dyulgerov also carefully analyses the relations between the Latins and the native population and comes to the correct conclusion that the only period in which one can speak of the integration of the natives into the new state was the reign of Emperor Henri (1206 - 1216). Unlike his brother, he "opened" the feudal hierarchy to representatives of the old Byzantine aristocracy and made it possible for the natives to occupy higher positions in the new administration (pp. 202 - 203). Despite some exceptions, (such as the example of Theodore Vranas), the central apparatus of the empire was predominantly occupied by Franks, intermarriage was rare, and distrust of Greeks prevailed among the Latin elite (p. 205).

The third chapter of the monograph is devoted to the **Principality of Morea**; its subparts follow the same structure of exposition. The first subchapter examines the structure and functioning of the Principality of Morea. Here the functioning of the offices of the Principality of Achaea is presented in detail, the question of the dual vassalage of the Morean prince is explored in detail, the question of the succession to the throne in Morea is traced, and the plausible conclusion is reached that *under the Villardouens the position of the Morean seigneur was much closer to the Roman principle of* ***primus inter pares*** *than to the power available to the Latin emperor* (210 p.). It has also been correctly pointed out that the Neapolitan kings, especially in the period 1267-1309, exercised much more control both in the internal affairs of Morea and in its foreign policy (p. 214). As far as the government in Latin Morea is concerned, its organisation began at the beginning of the conquest. Its posts and structure, like those of Latin Constantinople, were brought over from Western Europe, whence the Crusaders came. Unlike Constantinople and France, Morea lacked the most important office, that of the seneschal (p. 223). With a detailed study of the offices, Dyulgerov concludes that an office not present in the central government of the Latin Empire is attested in Morea. This was the office of the *purveyor of fortresses (castles)*. From the name itself it is evident that its holder had economic as well as military duties (p. 229). The appearance of the office of *admiral*, introduced by the Anjou, is noted. In creating this office they made one of their rare innovations in the governmental structure of Morea. In this case Charles d'Anjou, brother of the French king Louis IX, carried over this title not from his homeland but from the Sicilian kingdom (236 p.). The study reveals why free cities did not emerge in the imperial domain, while a stronger urban gentry was established in Morea, participating in the political life of the principality. The presence of free inhabitants (*burgenses*) in the Moorish cities during Frankish rule is strongly attested. They enjoyed economic privileges and, probably, administrative ones (pp. 241-242).

The second sub-chapter is entitled Feudalisation in Morea and, like the previous chapter, traces the processes of imposing feudal attitudes here in the manner of Western Europe. The Morean barons received their fiefs thanks to their participation in the conquest of the peninsula. Dyulgerov rightly recognizes the fact that, because of their great role in the conquest of the Peloponnese and the establishment of the principality, however, the barons possessed some of the prerogatives of sovereign power: they had the right to issue their own coinage and to build fortresses without the consent of the prince, and they could be judged only by the Supreme Court, i.e. by the Court of the Feathers (pp. 246-247).

Special emphasis is placed on the Church, noting again the moderate policy of Rome both in the imperial domain and in southern Greece, but despite this moderation, cases of natives converting to Catholicism were rare. Both in the imperial domain and in Morea the higher orthodox clergy, refusing to accept the supremacy of the pope, left their cathedrals and were replaced by Catholic clergy. The study does not omit the fact that in the principality of Morea, too, the military-monastic orders received lands and property. The author also goes into detail about the conflicts that arose between the Church and the secular authorities in Morea.

Of interest is the section on the Army and military organization. Dyulgerov traces the formation of the army both in Latin Romagna and in Morea, and reaches the reasoned conclusion of its feudal character in Morea by the end of the 13th century and the increasing role of mercenaries thereafter. The author's reasoning is correct that *although the Angevins retained the backbone of the military organization in Achaea, composed of feudal contingents, external danger and reduced opportunities for recruiting knights made the principality dependent on mercenary units. The increasing role of foreigners in the defense of the principality clearly had negative consequences for it* (p. 282).

The last part of chapter three deals with relations between the Franks and the natives in Morea, with N. Dyulgerov puts forward the thesis that, although incomplete, the integration of the natives into the feudal model of social development was more evident in the principality of Morea than in the imperial domain, with the exception of the reign of Henri de Hainault. The Greeks constituted the vast majority of the population of the peninsula (284 s.). I fully agree with the author's assertion that the local archons wished to retain their hereditary lands and their position as regional leaders. Based on an analysis of the text from the Greek version of the Morea Chronicle, Dyulgerov correctly concludes that the source is particularly indicative of the desires of the local inhabitants. According to him, in addition to guaranteeing the landed estates of the aristocrats, the knights promised to preserve the Orthodox faith, the application of the old Byzantine laws, and the Byzantine tax system (p. 285). I also support his view that from the middle of the 13th century some of the Greek nobles *took a step forward in integrating themselves into the feudal hierarchy of the peninsula*. (287 p.) Although they did not occupy the highest places in it, they fulfilled their vassal obligations to the prince and fought alongside the Latins against the Byzantines in the 13th and 15th centuries.

The fourth chapter of the monograph is entitled Venetian Romagna. Like the other chapters, it explores the same elements of the governance of these territories: the formation of Venetian Romagna, its structure and functioning, the feudalisation of the Venetian dominions, the Church, the military and military organisation, and the relationship between the Venetians and the natives in the colonies.

Here again, as in the previous chapters, the formative moments of the Venetian possessions in the Peloponnese (primarily Modon and Coron) and Crete are examined in detail and presented in sequence. It has been rightly recognized that while the conquest of Crete was a state-sponsored and organized initiative, the conquest of the Aegean islands /Naxos, Paros, Siphnos, Syros, Thermia, Melos, Andros, Santorini, Tinos, etc./ was the work of individual Venetian aristocrats and adventurers (p. 303). The case of Negroponte, the island of Euboea, is discussed in detail. True is the author's conclusion *that in only a few years after the Fourth Crusade the Commune acquired an almost monopolistic right in the trade of the former Roman lands and increased its territory with many new islands, peninsulas and port towns located on the main trade arteries in the Ionian and Aegean seas* (p. 305).

In a separate subchapter, Dyulgerov discusses the structure and functioning of the Venetian dominions in Aegean. The author specifies the important fact that the Serenissima had three types of "colonies" in the Aegean and Ionian seas. These were the commercial representations, the ostracised possessions of Venetian nobles who at some point accepted the protectorate of the Republic, and the lands directly occupied by the officials of the Signoria (310 p.). Н. Dyulgerov rightly emphasizes that the most complete and detailed picture of the Venetian model of government, of relations with the local population and the degree of their integration into the new political system can be observed in the dominions under the direct rule of Venice. The island of Crete is an example of the full deployment of direct Venetian administration (311 p.) The author notes two important features in the structure and organization of the *Stato da Mar*. *First, ... the Venetians borrowed the model of government from their homeland and applied it to their new possessions in varying degrees. Its main characteristic was that it was headed by a single governor... (p. 311). The second feature was that the highest functionaries in the Venetian dominions were appointed directly by the Metropolitan. It defined their powers and duties, defined their mandate, their salary and exercised constant control over their work. Thus the colonies of the Signoria resembled small Venice* (312 p.).

Special attention in this chapter, like the previous ones, is given to the feudalisation of Venetian territories in this region. The author stresses that Venetians in the Aegean possessions of the Republic were divided into three main groups: fief holders (mostly nobles), clerics and bourgeois. All of them were free and among them the dependent peasants were absent, as in Frankish Morea and other parts of the Latin Empire. Н. Dyulgerov correctly observes that the land-holding regime imposed by the Commune in Crete differed from that established by the knights in Frankish Morea and the imperial domain.

*The Cretan feudati, however, only took an oath of allegiance, not a homage*. The second peculiarity is that *this oath is not directed to the seigneur but to Venice, albeit personified by the Doge*. Another important feature *is that the Cretan feudati often neglected their military duties and resided usually in the cities, where they participated equally with the bourgeois in commercial activities*. The latter was completely atypical of Western Europe and Morea, but was common to aristocratic Venetian families (pp. 342-343).

I fully agree with the author's thesis that no typical feudal hierarchy was established in Crete. *A centralized republican model of government was established there, which usurped some of the prerogatives of the Cretan feudal lords* (p. 348).

In the subchapter devoted to the Church, Dyulgerov notes the peculiarities of the island's ecclesiastical organization, pointing out the characteristic feature that the Latin inhabitants, mainly Venetians, were served by local Catholic priests. Bishops were also appointed from among the local Latin clergy, in contrast to the rest of Romagna, where almost all hierarchs were sent from Western Europe (p. 352). The fact that the lower clergy in the Venetian colonies consisted mainly of Greek priests, who continued to serve the large Orthodox population after the conquest, is emphasized.

As in the previous chapters, due attention is paid here to the army and military organization in the Venetian dominions. In view of the fact that these possessions were mainly insular and coastal, the necessity of maintaining a navy for their defence is evident. The author discusses in detail the different types of ships and their armament; points out that each colony had its own Arsenal, similar to that of Venice; and discusses the role of the Admiral in charge of the fleet.

The last part of chapter four is devoted to the relations between the Venetians and the natives. The author truthfully concludes that, as in other Latin possessions in the Balkans, so in the Venetian lands in Aegean during the whole period of Venetian rule here, the Latins /including the Venetians/ remained a minority (383 p.). Dyulgerov , on the basis of his studies of source material, points out the differences in the integration of the local population. He also gives specific examples. The history of Crete after its conquest by the Venetians is a series of uprisings against the new power and is a symbol of hostility rather than tolerance between Greeks and colonists, while the Venetian colony, which had a high degree of integration of the natives to the new system of government and evidence of religious tolerance, is Corfu (384 p.).

I fully agree with the author's thesis that in the late 14th and early 15th centuries an external factor, such as the invasion of the Ottomans in the Balkans and in Aegean, precipitated a change in the behavior of Venice in its colonies. *In order to make her power more stable in her old dominions and to gain others, she began to practice a more tolerant policy towards the natives* (403 p.).

The conclusion is the last part of Nicholas Dyulgerov's monograph, in which he summarizes the conclusions of the text. I fully agree with the author's conclusions that some of the western offices lost their importance or became honorary, influenced by local traditions, but mostly by the immediate needs of the knights and the military conjuncture (405 p.). I share the opinion of N. Dyulgerov that the power of the Latin monarchs was considerably more limited than that of the Byzantine emperors. His assertion that *one of the main consequences of the Crusaders' settlement in the Balkans and Aegean was the introduction of feudalism* is correct (p. 408). The author correctly points out the differences in the imperial domain and Morea, where a classical multi-level feudal pyramid took shape. The effects of Venetian rule, which led to the development of urban life and to urbanization, are faithfully recognized, but in these territories full self-government, such as in the West, was never achieved. The changes in military organization that occurred in the imperial domain with the loss of territories and the gradual shift to a mercenary army and the need for external funding are noted, as is the retention of the feudal army in Morea for considerably longer.

This work presents in detail the administration of the Latin territories in the Balkans and in Aegean; traces both the relations of the Franks and Venetians with the local population; and the role of the Church in these territories of the peninsula; and examines the army and military organization in all its particularities, with its similarities and differences with the Western European model; a deep dissection of feudalisation in these Latin territories of the Balkans is made, taking into account the peculiarities in relation to Western Europe; a significant contribution is also made by the brilliant analysis made of the whole system of Frankish and Venetian government in the region.

Extremely valuable is the overall picture of the Western Franco-Venetian model of government, formed in the Balkans and in Aegean in the period 13-15 centuries, created by the author on the basis of the sources used. I can safely say that the monograph as a whole has a contributory character.

All of the above gives me reason to point out that the monograph is an undoubted success not only for Dr Nikola Dyulgerov, but also for Bulgarian media studies as a whole. This study can be evaluated as a solid basis for a number of future studies on the problems of the history of the Balkans, of the Western feudal model, of the Western model of government in the region of the Eastern Mediterranean, of Latin-indigenous relations, of the role and significance of the Papacy in politics and East-West relations in the period 13-15 centuries outside the official contacts with the Byzantine Empire and outside the aspirations for union with the Eastern Church.

I would like to say a few words about the second monograph The Wars of Charlemagne, with which Dr. Nikola Dyulgerov participated in the competition for associate professor. The book is written with a thorough knowledge of the military subject matter on which N. Dyulgerov has been teaching a specialized course in recent years. In such a peculiar subject, of great interest to some and completely boring and even tedious to others, I can say with full conviction that the author has succeeded in presenting the wars of the Frankish king and later emperor Charlemagne with unusual insight, with deep understanding and after a thorough study of the sources of the period. The book is written in light and readable language, which contributes to the easy grasp of this difficult subject. I sincerely congratulate the author on this scholarly achievement.

The articles and studies submitted for the competition are characterized by a concrete and detailed study of various aspects of the governance and relations of Western states and their possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean region and complement the conclusions presented in the habilitation thesis.

**Conclusion**

After getting acquainted with the submitted materials and scientific works and pointing out their scientific contributions, I find it justified to give my positive vote for the choice of the Dr. Nikola Dyulgerov to the academic position of “ASSOCIATED PROFESSOR” at the Faculty of History of Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski” in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology. I believe that he fully deserves it.

20. 11.2023

Sofia **Reviewed by:**

**/** Prof. Ivayla Popova**/**