**Promotion Review of a Candidate’s Application for the Academic Position “Associate Professor”**

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of

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Member of the Scientific Committee for conducting a competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 2.2: History and Archaeology (Research Area: Medieval History ‒ The western model of government in the Aegean – Franks and Venetians (13th – 15th century), published in State Gazette № 65/ 28.07.2023, to meet the academic needs of the History Faculty at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

All legal deadlines and procedures for the announcement of the competition have been observed. Assist. Prof. Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov, PhD is the only candidate in the competition announced for the needs of the History Faculty at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The candidate has submitted the complete set of documents required by the Law on the Promotion of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB in Bulgarian). The scientometric indicators of the applicant’s deposited materials show that they fully correspond to the minimal national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor, as it can be seen from the attached “Report on the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of ZRASRB”.

 In September 2002 Assistant Professor Nikola Dyulgerov, PhD, completed his higher education at the History Faculty of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” as a “Master of History” and “History teacher” with a specialization in “History of Byzantium, the Balkans and Medieval Europe”. Five years later (in October 2007) he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation in professional field 2.2 “History and Archaeology” on the topic “The Angevin’s possessions on the Balkans (13th – 15th century)” at the Sofia University’s Department of Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History. From September 2006 to June 2011, he taught “History and Civilizations” at the Lycée Français Alphonse de Lamartine de Sofia (“IX French Language High School “Alphonse de Lamartine”). In November 2010, he won a competition, after which he holds the academic position of Assistant Professor in the aforementioned Department of Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History.

The candidate has extensive teaching experience, having over the years led seminars and lectures on disciplines such as “Medieval History”, “Kingdom of France X‒XV C.”, “War in Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean”, “The Crusades”, “The Principality of the Morea, the Latin “stronghold” in the Balkans”, “Building an Empire in the footsteps of Charles d’Anjou”, “Italian maritime republics (IX‒XVI C.)” and “Power, institutions, societies, and culture in Antiquity and the Middle Ages”, which are also related to his research activity. He easily communicates with school and university students. Nikola Dyulgerov has published a number of scientific works, school textbooks, handbooks, and atlases, and has participated in many scientific conferences and scientific projects, as well as in special courses for qualification improvement for teachers. He is a member of several scientific organizations, including Mediaevalia, Association for European and Mediterranean Medieval Studies; the Association of Byzantinists and Medievalists in Bulgaria; a member of the Supervisory Board of the “IF-94” Cooperation, etc. Certainly, his proficiency in foreign and ancient languages such as French, English, Russian, Latin, and Greek contributes to his academic abilities and expertise.

For participation in the announced competition Dr. Dyulgerov submitted a total of seven publications: three monographs, three articles, and one study. I will begin by reviewing the candidate’s monograph presented as a habilitation thesis, which is entitled “The Western Model of Government in the Aegean: Franks and Venetians (13th – 15th century)”. The monograph was published in 2023 in a volume of 439 pages. This is a study on the structure of the government models established after the Fourth Crusade by the Frank and Venetian conquerors in the former Byzantine lands in the Southern Balkans and the Aegean region. The work includes an introduction and four chapters, divided in turn into separate parts with their own titles, a conclusion, a bibliography, a summary in English, and an appendix (containing maps). The content and structure fully correspond to the main objectives of the research formulated in the introduction (pp. 7–9). At first glance, there are some omissions among the Latin or Frank states established in the Balkans, such as the state founded by the Knights of St. John on Isle of Rhodes and the Dodecanese archipelago, which existed for over two centuries (1310–1523) or even longer-lasting Genoese colonies in the Eastern Aegean. However, N. Dyulgerov has pointed out in the introduction that “as examples of the construction and functioning of the model established by the Franks, will be used the lands of the imperial domain and the Principality of the Morea” and “as the main example for the structure and development of the Venetian model of government will serve the island of Crete”, in this way warning us that the main attention will be focused on the aforementioned domains. The examples chosen by the author are appropriate, as for them were preserved the largest (compared to the other Latin states in the region) volume of narrative sources and documents ‒ for the Latin Empire and the Principality of Achaia[[1]](#footnote-1) in the 13th ‒ 15th centuries and for the Venetian colony of Candia (Crete) between the 13th and the 17th century. The text, based on a suitable selection of sources and documents, followed the creation and the political history of the Latin Empire, the Venetian dominions, and the Morea by marking the most important events. The main purpose of the first chapter is rather to recreate the historical background, or, as the author puts it, “a very brief overview of the political development”[[2]](#footnote-2). The primary emphasis, which is centered on uncovering the government model and the pursuit of this objective, commences in the second chapter, which delves into the imperial domain’s structure and functioning. This chapter reveals consecutively the unique characteristics of Latin Romania’s administration[[3]](#footnote-3), the implementation of the Western feudal model in the conquered lands, the role of the Latin Church, the organization of the army, and, finally, the interactions between the Latin settlers and the local population. The remaining two chapters, which are dedicated to the Principality of Morea and the so-called Venetian Romania, retain nearly the same structure. The research results are effectively summarized in the conclusion.

I concur with the majority of the theses advocated by N. Dyulgerov in the aforementioned monograph. Specifically, I agree with the notion that, similar to the “classic” Crusader’s overseas territories in Syria and Palestine (The Frankish Outremer), the Latin state formations established in the Aegean region and the Balkans also frequently needed assistance from their “motherland” to survive. Such assertion most strongly applies to the Latin Empire during almost its entire period of existence, as can be seen, for example, from the data given in chapter II.4, pp. 197‒198. Completely accurate is the author’s conclusion that the structure of the Frankish states bears stronger resemblance to the organization found in their respective (western) homelands, despite the incorporation of certain local elements. The book contains extensive source material on the military forces of the Latin states in the aforementioned area, and the estimations of their size and composition completely align with the most recent scientific findings on the topic. Finally, I want to emphasize the high quality of the historical maps in the addendum. Overall, I think the research work is of high scientific quality and makes a significant contribution to the subject, possessing the essential qualities required for a habilitation thesis.

Five of the other works, presented by the candidate for the competition, explore topics that are in one way or another connected to the problems discussed in the habilitation thesis. One publication that naturally stands out among them is the monograph that focuses on the history of the Angevin dominions in the Balkans during the 13th‒14th century. This work encompasses the establishment and development of all the Balkan territories under the d’Anjou dynasty, marking the first comprehensive exploration of this subject. Additionally, similar to the habilitation thesis, it includes a research on the government structure of the Angevin dominions that also have been influenced by the Western European feudal model. We could see almost the same topic about the Latin government structures in the former Byzantine territories in two of the presented articles: “The Status of the Principality of Morea at the beginning of 13th century” and “The Establishment of the Venetian Power over the Isle of Crete”. Two additional publications delve into the Balkan endeavors of the Lombard count Boniface of Montferrat, the founder of the Kingdom of Thessaloniki, and the history of the Principality of Vallona, a small state founded by a brother of the Bulgarian Tsar John Alexander within the borders of present-day Albania. It is worth mentioning that the latter material provides the first comprehensive account of the history of the Vallona principality in Bulgarian language, covering the whole period from its emergence in the middle of the 14th century until its destruction by the Ottomans in the first quarter of the next century.

The last, seventh work with which the candidate participated in the announced competition is the monograph “Wars of Charlemagne,” which is a separate volume to the “History of Wars” series, released by the “Millennium” Publishing House. This is a thorough examination of the military history of the Frankish Empire during the Early Middle Ages, when it was ruled by the legendary Charlemagne. A work devoted to this subject was published for the first time in Bulgarian, making it one of the few examples of its genre ‒ medieval military history ‒ published in our country.

In conclusion, I will point out that with his remarkable teaching activity, scientific output and active participation in scientific organizations and forums, Dr. Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov has firmly established his reputation within the academic circles. Dr. Dyulgerov has also gained recognition among the broader Bulgarian public due to his frequent appearances in the massmedia. Тhe documents submitted by the applicant fully correspond to the requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Guideline about its execution. The monograph he submitted for habilitation thesis is a work that contains scientific contributions to the study of the Balkans’ medieval history. For all the aforementioned reasons, I strongly recommend to the esteemed Scientific Committee to award Dr. Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov the academic rank of Associate Professor in Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology.

24th of November 2023 Signature:

Sofia

1. Other names used in the literature for the same Latin statelet are Principality of Achaea or Morea. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *The Western Model of Government in the Aegean: Franks and Venetians*, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Романия е името, с което западноевропейците в този период означават земите на Византия. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)