**OPINION**

*of Prof. Yordan Nedev Peev, Ph.D., member of the scientific jury, appointed by Order № RD 38-561 / 26.11.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski ”in connection with the defense of the doctoral dissertation of Mr. Angel Mitkov Orbetsov: "BULGARIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS FROM LIBERATION UNTIL THE END OF THE 50S OF THE XX CENTURY"intended for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".*

The dissertation examines the relations of the third Bulgarian state with Iran until the early 50s of the ХХth century. The time limits were fixed after discussion in the college of specialists in contemporary Bulgarian history and lead to an appropriate decision.

Mr. Angel Orbetsov convincingly states the reasons for compiling the present work. He points out that both countries are among the most ancient and are centers of cultures with influence beyond their borders ... Iran is the first Asian country to establish diplomatic relations with the Principality of Bulgaria in the distant 1897 An important reason is the lack of academic research on the history of bilateral relations with Iran, and the dissertation meets this need.

The topic is fully covered by the addition of two introductory parts. The first is dedicated to the history of Iran until the middle of the twentieth century. The author points out that in history its statehood follows a rare ethno-cultural and linguistic continuity. It is due to the ability to incorporate the conquerors to their age-old traditions and assimilate them. "(р. 10) The part is well arranged, presented in living language and based on various sources of academic research. It can also serve as a textbook. In a case of its separate publication, the author should expand the exposition of socio-political development from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day, taking into account the total volume and structure of the previous content presented here.

The second introductory part is under the title „Bulgarian-Iranian relations through the centuries - a brief overview." (pp. 93-114) It is "an attempt to arrange the layers in the cultural and historical contacts between the two peoples over the centuries." (p. 7). The "arrangement" is skillfully done. The works of the Bulgarian authors are the basis, but the achievements of the joint activity with the Iranian scientists are also used. The author presents on a scientific level and avoids extreme conclusions that may raise doubts and reservations. This is evident from the very title and content of the paragraph "Proto-Bulgarians - possible roots" (pp.100-109). The two introductory parts have the qualities of a monograph and a scientific article.

The topic оf the dissertation is successfully presented in eight chapters. In his approach the author combines chronological and thematic principles. The same approach is followed in each chapter by dividing it into several paragraphs. He traces the relations between the two countries in each period as a reflection of the socio-political and ideological conditions in them. He skillfully points out their dependence on the international situation and assesses its constant and decisive impact on the content of bilateral relations. The analysis of the situation inherent in a professional historian and political scientist alternates with the consideration of a diplomatic, consular, legal, economic, financial, cultural, and protocolled issue often presented as a diplomatic research report. Their alternation and comparison helps to outline a true and dynamic picture of relations between the two countries. This main merit of the dissertation turns it into a detailed and in-depth reference work, useful for anyone who deals in more detail with the history of relations between the two countries. The collected material deserves to be published as part of a monograph with a wider time scope

The tasks and goals set by the author have been achieved through careful and skillful research and use of numerous and diverse sources related to a multilateral topic. The study "BULGARIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS FROM LIBERATION TO THE END OF THE 50S OF THE XX CENTURY" meets the requirements for a dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". I propose to the esteemed jury to award it to Mr. Angel Mitkov Orbetsov.

5 February 2022 Prof. Yordan Peev