

STATEMENT

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of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" by professional field 2.2. History and archaeology (History of Bulgaria - History of the Bulgarian Revival)

Author: Vladimir Krasimir Terziev

Title: Health Education in the Bulgarian Society 1856 – 1878

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Plamen Dimitrov Mitev

General description of the submitted materials

By order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" No. RD-38-207/27.4.2023 upon the decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of History (FH) with Protocol No. 7 / 25.04.2023 I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury for the defense of Vladimir Krasimir Terziev of his PhD Thesis entitled "Health Education in the Bulgarian Society 1856 – 1878" for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" by professional field 2.2. History and archaeology (History of Bulgaria - History of the Bulgarian Revival).

The candidate has enclosed the dissertation and 16 publications - ten published and six in press (as of the date of submission of the documents - 25.04.2023). Although all publications are related to the period considered in the dissertation, Vl. Terziev reports nine publications on the dissertation topic, three of which are in print. The author has presented the results of his research at various scientific forums - doctoral seminars, national and international scientific conferences (13 in total).

Brief biographical data about the PhD student

Vl. Terziev graduated with a bachelor's degree (2017) and a master's degree (2019) at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of History, Department History of Bulgaria - History of the Bulgarian Revival. After winning a competition he was appointed as a regular PhD student at the Department.

As a student Vl. Terziev shows willingness and ability for scientific work, as evidenced by the defended with honors thesis with the topic "The military reforms of the sultans Mahmud II (1808 - 1839) and Abdulmejid I (1839 - 1861) and their impact on the Bulgarians", with scientific supervisor Prof. asst. Dr. Vanya Racheva.

The choice of the dissertation topic reflects a sustained scholarly interest in the period of the Bulgarian Revival, and the ability to identify important research questions. The capacity of Vl. Terziev for critical scientific work is also indicated by the invitations to review diploma theses at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (six reviews).

Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, conclusions, a bibliography and lists of sources used - 348 typewritten pages in total. The extensive bibliography includes titles in Bulgarian, Russian and English. The structure is well thought out and suitable for the achievement of the main research goal - to analyze the processes of entry and spread of modern type health knowledge in Bulgarian society in the second half of the 19th century.

The **abstract** of 31 pages reflects the general characteristics of the thesis, its structure, volume and content.

Contributions and significance of the research

The topic of the emergence of modern health knowledge, the ways of its dissemination and its outcomes is relevant not only because of the increased interest in the history of medicine, health care, health work in general due to the global pandemic COVID19. The significance of the topic is determined by the way the research aims and objectives are set. Through an in-depth analysis of health education Vl. Terziev manages to draw a multi-layered, dense picture of the processes taking place in Bulgarian society during the Revival period. The embedding and consideration of the topic in the context of European developments, including the dynamics in the Ottoman Empire, is valuable.

The first chapter entitled "**Health knowledge during the Revival era**" – is divided into three parts - "Folk Medicine or Traditional Healing", "Modern Health Knowledge and Bulgarian Revival Society" and "The Clash" and "Coexistence" between Traditional and Modern Health Knowledge during the Revival Period".

Beginning my reading of the dissertation with chapter one, I wondered whether the presentation of traditional healing and the emergence of modern health knowledge did not fit into the still strong Bulgarian-centric historical narrative. Vl. Terziev addresses the Bulgarian Revival society and the Bulgarians (mainly Orthodox), the issues of health culture and the development of health education in other ethnic and confessional groups in the Bulgarian lands are not subject of the study.

But Vl. Terziev provides data showing the importance of healers of Greek, Turkish, and Albanian or Jewish origin; derives the importance of the Akhtars, analyzes the transmission of knowledge both orally and through the so called Hekimical books, emphasizing that some of the "healing books" have their origins in Greek or Ottoman primary sources.

In not a few of the Bulgarian sources of the period, healers from other ethnic and/or confessional groups are presented in a mocking and pejorative way ("Greek bilhers [herbalists] and Jewish

charlatans", Greek-Arnautian magicians, charlatans", etc.). Terziev analyzes the bias in the sources as part of the struggle of the Revival enlighteners to establish modern health knowledge and replace traditional healers with professional physicians. These efforts were at the same time part of the national liberation movement and the struggle to create and establish a Bulgarian identity. For the whole period of the national revival VI. Terziev emphasizes the parallel existence, "clash" and "coexistence", of the two main forms of health knowledge - traditional and modern. "Clash" and "coexistence" also characterise relations between different ethnic and religious groups.

The entry and development of the Bulgarian health culture is discussed in a comprehensive, broad context in the **second chapter** entitled **"Towards the modernization of Bulgarian health culture during the Revival era: prerequisites and basic guidelines"**.

Terziev clarifies the basic conceptual categories used - health knowledge and health education, health educators and literature. The author presents a synthesis of Western European philosophical ideas and attitudes towards natural science and science in general during the Enlightenment period. A macroframework are the reform initiatives in the Ottoman Empire, which cover a significant time period in the 18th century, after a brief interruption resumed in the 19th century.

Terziev outlines in a balanced way the process of gradual modernization, the importance of institutionalization in the health sector, the establishment of sanitary administration, the creation of urban pharmacies and the legal regulation of pharmacists, the development of medical literature in the Ottoman Empire. Reform undertakings in the Danube Vilayet are presented in more detail. The contribution of the High Porte's health policy to the gradual introduction of modern health knowledge into Bulgarian society is acknowledged.

Terziev highlights the growing role of the Military Medical School in Constantinople in training of physicians and promoting health culture; the growing interest of Bulgarians in studying medicine after 1856; the importance of appointing urban physicians and opening modern Ottoman hospitals in the Balkan provinces of the Empire, and the resulting "public impulse" in a number of Bulgarian municipalities to seek out and appoint graduate physicians. At the same time, he points out the limitations: The Ottoman Empire did not establish a unified hospital network, a number of settlements remained without professional medical care, the control of compliance with the adopted legal measures was limited and some of them remained on paper, etc.

One of the focuses of the analysis of the modernization of health culture is the fight against frequent epidemics of infectious diseases. The author convincingly highlights the role of Western European countries, as well as the Russian Empire, the importance of the International Sanitary Conferences and of the quarantine services introduced against cholera; the expansion of health education in the Ottoman Empire and the impact of these factors on the Bulgarian Revival society are also traced.

The author pays special attention to the foreign influence; the role of the Catholic and Protestant missions in the Balkans, which are related to health care, is highlighted.

After outlining the factors and routes for the introduction and spread of modern health knowledge into Bulgarian society, Terziev devotes the **third chapter to "Health Education and the Revival School"**.

The "debate" on health education is traced in detail, with the author explaining the quotation marks by the nature of the debate: "If on one side stand the advocates for the inclusion of hygiene and other disciplines with elements of medical knowledge as subjects in the school curricula, as well as the creation of the necessary textbooks, on the other side there are no opponents. Their personification is rather the indolence of a large part of the educational class - doctors, teachers, etc., - who have the necessary competences to help increase the health literacy of students, but do not take the appropriate actions" (p. 165, Abstract p. 16).

The analysis of the origin and development of the idea of health education for school children is placed in a broad European context. In describing the transition from medieval to secular type of education, Terziev points to the importance of Enlightenment ideas, that first penetrated Bulgarian society through Greek health handbooks used in Greek schools - translations of or inspired by French, Italian and other authors.

Among the Bulgarian Revival intellectuals who defended the need for health training for the younger generations, Terziev emphasises the role of educators and doctors. New, less cited, sources are used to highlight the contribution of prominent Bulgarian public figures. The author also brings interesting materials that brings often overlooked personalities out of oblivion, such as for example Mihail Kifalov, Dimitar Nachev, Petar Purgov, Nacho Planinski, Hristo Etarski and others.

Among the sciences in the form of which modern health knowledge spread during the Revival era (anatomy, physiology, anthropology, etc.), the author highlights hygiene. Hygiene was considered a science in its own right during this period, with a strong practical focus on protecting individual's and public' health, and it was therefore advocated to include it as a subject in school curricula. Using specific examples, Terziev traces how health matter emerged from textbooks with mixed content into hygiene guides for teaching purposes, although hygiene was not among the subjects taught en masse until the Liberation. An interesting line of analysis is the relationship drawn between hygiene knowledge and gymnastics.

Terziev outlines the specifics of health education literature as the most important means of disseminating modern health knowledge and, at the same time, its main result in the **fourth chapter "Health topics on the pages of Revival literature and periodical press"**.

The author presents an extended classification scheme, undertakes an in-depth analysis of the content of certain works and clarifies the circumstances of their creation as well as their source(s). Thematically, VI. Terziev emphasizes the complexity of health education issues, ranging from hygienic knowledge (personal, public, school, etc. hygiene) to socially significant problems such as alcoholism and moral-ethical issues such as maternal and child health. It is understandable that

with such a broad framing of the research questions, some topics are rather sketchy and could be expanded (such as the topic of women's education and gender equality, p. 296).

Terziev's analyses are based on a painstaking search of scattered and fragmentary sources. The author gathers data from numerous personal literature collections, school library inventories, correspondences, journals, normative documents, etc. to derive careful but well-grounded hypotheses.

In the final part of the dissertation VI. Terziev draws the main **conclusions** made in the individual parts of the conducted research, emphasizing the complexity of the process, the significant results, but also the relatively slow establishment of modern health knowledge as the main form of health care in Bulgarian society.

VI. Terziev's work combines issues of political, cultural, social history; cultural anthropology/ethnology; history of medicine and health; history of education and schooling. The broad range of topics requires the use of a wide range of sources. The contribution is based on a thorough knowledge of sources, VI. Terziev shows skills in critical reading and interpretation of different types of sources (ethnographic materials, literature and periodicals, normative documents, study guides, memoirs, etc.).

The author shows knowledge of the publications on the issues related to the topic and period of Bulgarian history, conscientiously and with collegial correctness treats the accumulated research on the Bulgarian 19th century.

Recommendation

I am confident that the work will find a wide readership. In view of a publication, I recommend a light, mainly technical editing and a revision of the citation style to avoid double citations – in footnotes and in the bibliography.

I assume that the researcher will be interested in N. Danova's new book on childhood in Bulgarian society in 17th - 19th centuries.

CONCLUSION

Vladimir Krasimir Terziev presents an original contribution built on knowledge and written at a professional level. Vladimir Terziev shows commitment to the subject, has theoretical knowledge, skills in collecting and analyzing source materials and in arguing theses. VI. Terziev's publications in academic journals, his participation in scientific forums, his active expert activity are an expression and guarantee of his skills and competence in research work.

On the basis of the distinguished qualities of the PhD student and the contributions in his thesis, I recommend to the members of the Scientific Jury to award Vladimir Krasimir Terziev the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 2.2. History and Archaeology, DP History of Bulgaria - History of the Bulgarian Revival.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anelia



Kassabova

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