**REVIEW**

done by: *Vera Boneva*, ScD, Professor in History of Bulgaria,

member of the Scientific Jury

according to the order of the Rector of the University of Sofia St. Kliment

Ohridski, No. РД 38-207/ 27.04.2023,

concerning the defense of the dissertation of

**Vladimir Krasimir Terziev** for obtaining the

educational and scientific degree "Doctor", with the title:

*"Health Education in the Bulgarian Society 1856-1878"*,

with supervisor: Prof. Dr. Plamen Mitev,

(University of Sofia, History of Bulgaria Department)

**Information about the candidate and the procedure**

Vladimir Terziev obtained bachelor's and master's degrees in History at the Faculty of History of St Kliment Ohridski Sofia University. From February 2020 to February 2023, he was a doctoral student in the mentioned faculty – Department of History of Bulgaria. He was studying in a professional field 2.2. History and archaeology, scientific specialty History of Bulgaria (History of the Bulgarian Revival). From the submitted documentation it appears that he completed his individual plan on time and successfully wrote his dissertation work under the supervision of prof. PhD Plamen Mitev. He has covered national quantitative indicators of doctoral attainment and presented printed publications on the topic of the dissertation.

The text of dissertation was presented in the Department of History of Bulgaria on 11th April 2023. After due verification of the originality, a protocol was created for the absence of plagiarism and other copyright delicts. The protocol is signed by the scientific supervisor. The information included in the documents provided to me gives me a reason to assume that all legal requirements for finalizing the procedure have been met.

As a member of the scientific jury, I received all the necessary documents regarding the dissertation and the education of the doctoral student. I have also been provided with the abstract, which diligently shows the main contributions of the scientific research. I declare that I have no common publications or other forms of common professional activity with the candidate, which would be a prerequisite for a conflict of interest.

**General data for the dissertation**

The text of the dissertation is in the volume of 348 typewritten pages. The following main parts are distinguished: introduction, four chapters, division into individual paragraphs and subsections, conclusion, list of research results, archival materials, and periodical print, published documents, memoirs, studies, and reference literature. At the end of the text is added a list of used abbreviations. Four visual appendices and five tables have been added at appropriate places in the text; they are competently commented. The main narrative is supported by 1124 footnotes, which are rigorously created and create a reliable link between the main exposition and the sources of historical information used.

The structure of the main narrative is convincing and balanced. The review of the scientific literature on the topic of the dissertation carried out in the introduction, is extensive and thorough. The need for the present scientific work is convincingly shown, which not only summarizes the achievements in the history of health care and medicine in the Bulgarian lands during the Revival era, but also reconstructs the main circumstances related to health education in the period 1856-1878.

The author's research approach is modern and productive. It is demonstrated clearly in the definitions of the terms used presented in the introduction. The research goals and tasks are formulated adequately to the topic and source basis of the work. The ambition to summarize the available knowledge on the topic of health education during the Revival era is logical in a dissertation for the PhD educational and scientific degree; even more so, as Vladimir Terziev makes his academic contribution on the topic, which I clarify further in the review. Without considering a contribution, but rather a precise methodological approach, I emphasize that the author very convincingly works in the semantic environment of the categories "traditional society" and "modern society", skillfully placing them in the foundations of the analysis of historical realities that are subject of the dissertation. The highlighted circumstance is a sign that before us stands an already formed scientist – historian of the Bulgarian and European 19th century.

**Analysis of the main text**

The first chapter of the dissertation is titled "Healthy knowledge during the Revival era" and delves into an exploration of the key characteristics of traditional medicine as the prevailing form of healthcare in pre-modern society. This analysis is intricately linked to the intimate relationship between individuals and the natural world, folk culture, and the belief in supernatural forces. Notably, the first chapter makes a significant historiographical contribution through an exhaustive review of the scholarly literature on folk medicine. The comprehensive examination of archived information pertaining to local healers, sorcerers, hojis, fortune tellers, and similar practitioners enriches the existing body of research. Moreover, the chapter presents surviving handwritten medicine books associated with traditional medicine. Additionally, the role of the Christian religion in spiritual and physical healing is illustrated through various examples, including a compelling narrative that explores the endeavors of ecclesiastical institutions to combat pagan healing practices by canonizing healing saints.

The first chapter also investigates the state of health knowledge within Bulgarian Revival society. The author aptly argues that this aspect of modernization is closely intertwined with Enlightenment ideology and the advancements in natural sciences. Instances of the dissemination of modern healthcare knowledge within the public domain are elucidated through exemplars and the contributions of prominent figures, primarily through printed materials and educational initiatives. One particularly noteworthy section of the dissertation is titled 'The "collision" and "coexistence" between traditional and modern health knowledge during the Revival period.' This segment provides examples of the interpenetration of concepts and practices from traditional medicine into modern medicine, and vice versa. Similar to other spheres, health culture during the Revival era was characterized by syncretism rather than a strict adherence to either traditional or modern approaches. Nevertheless, the author asserts that scientific medicine, bolstered by socio-economic development, cultural advancement, and foreign influences, held a dominant position.

The second chapter of the dissertation delineates the primary prerequisites and fundamental principles of health culture during the Revival era. After a brief introduction to the historical-medical literature spanning the period from 1878 to 1944, the role of the Tanzimat reforms in shaping the public sphere of healthcare is expounded upon. Special attention is given to the Military Medical School in Constantinople, which played a decisive role in setting the direction of this development. The initial strides towards institutionalizing Ottoman healthcare were taken in response to frequent outbreaks of infectious diseases, particularly the plague and cholera during the 19th century, which are meticulously examined. Within the context of epidemic outbreaks, the author directs the narrative towards the independent actions undertaken by Bulgarians to preserve health and save lives amidst outbreaks of plague, cholera, and other contagious diseases.

The heightened public focusing in healthcare and the partial implementation of a state health policy in the Ottoman Empire further fueled the interest in medical professions, such as humanitarian doctors and pharmacists. Vladimir Terziev presents data from the scientific literature regarding Bulgarians who pursued medical education and graduated prior to 1878, supplementing this information with additional insights on some of the most notable figures among them. The author rightly emphasizes the exceptional role played by medical doctors in the advancement of health education within Bulgarian society, including through the primary medium of the time, the periodical press. By drawing on diverse primary and secondary sources, the dissertation showcases the significance of both traditional drugstores (akhtarniks) and modern pharmaceutical stores of the era, shedding light on the distinction between the two. The historian astutely observes that, based on available source information, the demarcation between akhtarniks and modern pharmacies is not always clearly defined, serving as further evidence of the syncretic nature that characterized the amalgamation of traditional and modern elements.

The third chapter of the dissertation delves into the topic of health education within schools during the Pre-Liberation era. The discourse surrounding 'health education' is presented by referencing a diverse range of sources, systematically compiling data on the calls made by prominent intellectuals for a more prominent inclusion of health education in the school curriculum. The decisive role played by renowned doctors, public figures, and educators such as Sava Dobroplodni, Stefan Bobchev, Venko Grumnikov, Nacho Planinski, Lyuben Karavelov, Anastas Karastoyanov, Todor Stoyanovich, Hristo Etarski, and others is described in terms of their contributions to incorporating the subject of Hygiene into certain educational programs.

The chronological progression of health education in Revival schools is meticulously traced, revealing the practices of educators, details about textbooks and teaching aids that fully or partially address health-related topics. The author effectively demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between health and moral education, as well as the fusion of secular and religious knowledge within the introduction of health topics in Revival schools. The contribution of the paragraph concerning the presence of Hygiene and Gymnastics subjects in educational institutions during the Pre-Liberation era is founded on extensive source material. Detailed analysis is conducted on textbooks and related educational modules, creatively illuminating the intersection of Anatomy, Psychology, Anthropology, and health education. Through an insightful examination of Revival-era printed literature, the author uncovers valuable information relevant to health education that is seemingly unrelated to health, found in works by authors such as Stefan Bobchev, Lyuben Karavelov, Dobri Voinikov, and others.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation focuses on health education literature from the Pre-Liberation era, which, according to Vladimir Terziev, epitomizes the gradual process of societal modernization in attitudes towards health. Drawing from a comprehensive survey of the entire body of health-related publications, the author presents two convincing classifications: one based on origin and authorship, and another based on the target audience for each publication. Key examples of targeted literature are analyzed in greater detail, uncovering their distinctive origins and scrutinizing data on distribution and societal impact. This section of the dissertation exhibits a positive inclination stemming from the author's specific preferences and intellectual affinity for Revival literature. A noteworthy observation made by Vladimir Terziev pertains to Dr. Ivan Bogorov's book, "The Village Doctor" (1875). By summarizing the prevalent low level of health culture among the population, the author concludes that books of this nature provide ordinary individuals with a means of navigating health adversities in the absence of accessible medical assistance. The last two paragraphs of the dissertation comprise a thematic exploration of the content aspects of health education literature and press publications.

The overall scope and subject matter of the targeted cultural corpus are outlined, leading to the conclusion that despite some achievements, modern health knowledge has not permeated the entirety of Bulgarian society. The adoption of modern health knowledge remains relatively limited, with the majority of the population adhering to their traditional rites and practices, indicative of a traditional perspective on health. The historian's assertion is compelling, stating that modern health knowledge is gradually establishing itself as the primary form of healthcare.

**Assessment of contributions and critical notes**

Vladimir Terziev has thoroughly and analytically developed his dissertation. A maximum range of relevant historical sources were used, some of which were not included in scientific circulation before this study. The historiographic overviews are complete and representative of the relevant issue. The text successfully combines a purely historical narrative with ethnological and anthropological approaches on some of the plots affecting traditional society and its health practices. The young author's attempt to systematize the literature devoted to health, hygiene, the human body, and their related subjects related to traditional and modern medical concepts and practices is successful. The observations made in the dissertation on the place and role of the school and the teachers for the expansion of modern health knowledge are also among the contributing elements of the scientific work. Among the outstanding features of the dissertation are its careful layout, the precise approach to the terms used and the scrupulous scientific apparatus. The study is written in a readable and pleasant Bulgarian language, avoiding old word forms and complex syntactic constructions typical of some historians of the 19th century.   
The lists of sources used are complete and comprehensive. The abstract reflects the content of the dissertation to the maximum extent, and its translation into English is correct in terms of historical terminology.

My main critical note concerns the excessiveness of some of the historiographical overviews – a normal form of reinsurance for budding historians. Partial overlap exists between the plot of the last two paragraphs of chapter one and the content of chapter four. However, this has not led to repetition, but rather to expanding the horizon of scope of the central topic in the dissertation - health literature in the context of Modernization. The question of the specific foreign influences on the cognitive layers of the modern health culture pushes from a slightly greater density. In a number of paragraphs, the factual material "jumps" the chronological boundaries of the topic defined in the title, which is generally unavoidable, but could be minimized in certain places.

The PhD candidate has submitted 9 published articles and six in press, repeatedly surpassing the highest standards for a history dissertation.   
The remaining scientometric indicators are also covered with maximum points. He has presented evidence of participation in 13 scientific forums, two academic internships and six peer-reviewed theses at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". His systematic interest in the subjects of social history and in subjects of education and literature, perceived in the professional guild as secondary, but essentially significant and valuable in order to reveal the essential tendencies of the Revival era, deserves admiration.

**Conclusion**

The work presented by Vladimir Terziev covers all the basic requirements for a dissertation in the professional field "History and Archeology". The text is carefully and competently written. Significant scientific contributions are available in the dissertation. The look at the manuscript sources and printed materials of the studied era is extremely broad and insightful. The author demonstrates intellectual courage and analytical skills. I recommend, after removing some minor inaccuracies and repetitions, that the text be published as a monograph.

In view of the above, I **vote in the affirmative** for awarding the educational and scientific degree Doctor in the professional field "History and Archeology" of Vladimir Terziev.

Prof. ScD Vera Boneva

Sofia, 14th July 2023