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OPINION

on a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree of PhD in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology

to **Marian Dimitrov Karagyozov,** a PhD student at the Contemporary Balkans Section of the Institute of Balkan Studies and Centre of Thracology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IBCT-BAS)

by Prof. Yura Konstantinova, DSc, IBCT-BAS, member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order No. 84 RD – 16/07.07.2023 of the Director of IBCT-BAS

Marian Karagyozov is a graduate of Constantine Cyril Philosopher National High School for Ancient Languages and Cultures and holder of a Bachelor's degree in Oriental Studies with Turkish Language at the Department of Mediterranean and Eastern Studies of New Bulgarian University. In the period 2005–2012 he obtained a Master's degree from the Law Faculty of Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski" specializing in public administration. In the 2013–2016 period he was a regular PhD student at IBCT-BAS and as such he won funding from BAS for a project for young scholars on the topic "Muslim minorities in the Balkans: external influences and local implications". He has worked as a correspondent of the Bulgarian National Radio in Turkey, as editor of News and Turkish-language Broadcasts at the Bulgarian National Radio, as editor-in-chief of UNA News Bulgaria, as Head of the Office of the Minister of Justice, as political analyst at the IBCT, where in 2022 he renewed his doctoral studies. He is proficient in English and Turkish and uses Russian.

The topic of Marian Karagyozov's dissertation "Turkey's Middle East Policy (2002–2011)", prepared under the scholarly supervision of Prof. Alexandre Kostov, Corresponding Member of BAS, is interesting and significant for Bulgaria. It has great research potential and fills a gap in Bulgarian science. The thesis meets the requirements of the law, a sufficient number of publications of the doctoral candidate on the topic of the thesis are listed and the requirements for admission to the defense are met. In addition to the publications cited in the author's abstract, M. Karagyozov is the author of the monograph "The New Turkish Foreign Policy and the Challenges Facing Bulgaria", Sofia, Diplomatic Institute, 2014, 178 pages, of four chapters of collective monographs, as well as of several scholarly and numerous journalistic articles. He has participated in scholarly and expert conferences, summer schools, youth exchanges and simulation games in several European countries.

The PhD thesis of M. Karagyozov consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and a list of references with a total length of 243 pages. The structure of the work

is logical and well-justified in view of the tasks set: to present the goals that the Turkish diplomacy set itself in the Middle East in the period 2002-2011, as well as the processes, developments and stages in the Turkish foreign policy regarding this geographical region (p. 4). The introduction clearly specifies the significance of the study, its aims and objectives, its chronological and geographical scope and a review and commentary on the existing bibliography on the subject and on the discussions among the various schools of historiography is made. In the first chapter the PhD student examines the historical development of the Turkish foreign policy until 2002, as well as the ideas of Ahmet Davutoğlu, the ideologue of the new Turkish foreign policy. The next three chapters trace and analyse Turkey's foreign policy regarding its Middle East Arab neighbours: Syria and Iraq (Chapter Two), Lebanon and Jordan (Chapter Three) and those on the Arabian Peninsula (Chapter Four). Chapter Five is devoted to Turkey's cooperation with the Arab Middle East countries in multilateral formats such as the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. The conclusion summarizes and presents the main inferences, while the contributions specified by the author reflect correctly the results of his work.

The dissertation is a contribution to Bulgarian historiography, and Marian Karagyozov is among the few well-versed Bulgarian specialists who have the knowledge and capacity to elaborate such a study. His good insight into historiography is evident, and so is his ability to work independently and critically with the source material and the historiographical authorities. I welcome the use of an interdisciplinary approach combining the methods of history, international relations and political science in writing the work. I find logical the author's main conclusions: 1. In building relations with the Middle East, the Justice and Development Party built on the long tradition and experience of Turkish diplomacy; 2. In the first decade of the 21st century Turkey engaged more comprehensively and multilaterally with the Middle East due to a number of factors, the most prominent among them being: the stronger emphasis on Ottoman and Islamic heritage in the Turkish home and foreign policy; the preferences of the small and medium-sized Anatolian producers; the stabilisation of the Turkish economy and domestic politics; a desire to fill the existing political vacuum in the region; Ankara's goal of becoming an energy hub for Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Central Asia, etc.; 3. Turkey's Middle East policy had the characteristics of Turkey's overall foreign policy, which sought to increase the country's influence at the regional level and aimed to play a more significant global role; 4. Until 2008 Turkey's Middle East policy basically coincided with the

priorities of the Western countries, but subsequently the Western economic and political model was not perceived as the only possible one.

A merit of the work is that it offers information and assessments published in Turkish, which are less known to the Bulgarian scholarly community. I am convinced that the presentation of the views of the well-known Turkish scholar and politician Ahmet Davutoğlu will arouse the interest of the readers, particularly since it is accompanied by a critical analysis of his theses. The existence of summaries in the subsections of the chapters makes a good impression.

I have a few comments on the formatting of the bibliography of the thesis. The sources are part of the bibliography and need not be placed in the heading of the section. The division by type of alphabet (Cyrillic and Latin) is incorrect, the correct division being by source and historiography, which are then listed by type of alphabet. It is improper to position journalistic publications as part of historiography. Usually publications in the press are organized in a separate section, as they are not of a scholarly nature.

In connection with the requirement of Article 2a(4) of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria regarding public access to dissertations, I would suggest to M. Karagyozov to make the following corrections before submitting his thesis to the National Centre for Information and Documentation: to indicate the field of higher education and the professional field in which he defends his thesis; to introduce uniformity in the fonts of the subchapters in the contents of his dissertation; to use the Bulgarian State Standard in formatting the notes; to remove any technical and grammatical inaccuracies in the text.

CONCLUSION: I express a positive opinion on the award of the educational and scientific degree of PhD in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, in the area of Modern and Most Recent History to Marian Karagyozov for his dissertation "Turkey's Middle East Policy (2002 – 2011)".

7 September 2023 Prof. Yura Konstantinova PhD