БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ
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OPINION

For the habilitation of Dr. Georgi Dimov

The first thing I want to point out is that Dr. Georgi Dimov's documents are presented accurately. Secondly, he has a diverse and rich scientific production, from which he selected 10 publications for the habilitation, out of a total of over 60 publications. The main one, of course, is the recently published book on the Komnenian era, to which the candidate has a marked affinity. So let me address this one first.

The fact that Dr. Georgi Dimov takes a difficult, in this case complex, approach to the chosen subject makes a vivid impression. Political history is mandatory, but now definitively out of fashion in historical space. Instead, the candidate presents us with an overview of the geographical features of the Balkans (this can be considered the "well-forgotten old"), climate changes - Bulgarian historical science lags behind the others on this topic - economy, social model, ethnic groups, etc. In short, Dr. Georgi Dimov successfully overcomes the idea planted in Bulgarian society that historical science is called to "praise" its own development. No wonder that elementarism prevails in this regard, and a whole historical college is harnessed to realize this model. So far so good and I have no major comments on the show.

It is probably an expression of my own opinion, but it seems to me that the candidate slightly overestimated the development of Byzantium in the Komnenian era. To begin with, the cities of the empire did not go the way of the free cities of Central and Western Europe, regardless of the terminology used. Secondly, the empire, even under such brilliant rulers as the representatives of the Komnenian dynasty, failed to restore its naval power, which increasingly fell into the hands of the Italian cities and, above all, of Venice. In terms of technological innovations, it lags behind first China, then Europe. A process of agrarianization of the economy is noticed. There are signs of military weakness associated

with the transition to the system of pronia and mercenaries. Etc. etc.! The strength of Byzantine society is education, shelters for old and sick people, the so-called "gerocomies", legal knowledge, the "philologizing" of society, etc. In my opinion, the era of the 11th-12th centuries should be viewed more critically, considering that the empire continues to be a territorial and human colossus and passes into the "guild- monarchy" phase. This approach can be overcome with more examples from the development of European societies. Nevertheless, the exposition of the book is lively and interesting. It is an easy read and will delight both specialists and casual readers.

The rest of the author's contributions to the announced contest he conditionally divided into three groups. The first, of course, is Byzantium in the 11th-12th centuries, represented by the mentioned monograph. The mere enumeration of the issues involved is impressive and includes virtually all aspects of development. But the multi-volume history of Bulgaria can hardly be criteria for the development of our knowledge on this matter.

In addition to the monograph, several other articles and studies are devoted to these problems, which further develop some problems. Such are, for example, the relations between Byzantium and England, studied on the basis of written, numismatic, etc. data, especially after 1066, the Latin quarters in the central and peripheral Balkan cities, the Balkans in the structure of Eurasianism, the economic model of the Komnenites (in some places here the author admits some modernization), Dr. Georgi Dimov's favorite topic of Byzantine Italy and etc.

The third problem circle the author has chosen to call Varia. They confirm the notion that he is a man of diverse interests. This section includes the Byzantine influences on the development of Italy, the silver vessel from the village of Svetlen, the Byzantine coinage, especially the silver Byzantine coins of the "vasilicon" type, issued in the likeness of the Venetian penny, etc. They show the high level of numismatic knowledge that the Romans

maintained until the end of the empire. For the author, they are indicative of the wide range of interests that guide him in his scientific work.

I would especially like to point out that Dr. Georgi Dimov remains faithful to the tradition of engaging writing. Otherwise, scientific works, no matter how high-level they are, hardly reach the reading public and do not fulfill their public function. Let's not forget that Clio has her own muse!

Based on the above, I allow myself to state that I fully support Dr. Georgi Dimov's habilitation. He has proven himself to be a highly erudite researcher, writes interestingly and has all the qualities to fill the places in science that we are vacating! I vote with conviction for his habilitation!

18.05.2023 г. Prof. Hristo Matanov

Sofia