

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
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OPINION

By Associate professor PhD Blagovest Njagulov,

Member of the scientific jury

for the competition for holding the academic title "Associate professor", Professional direction 2.2. "History and Archaeology", Scientific major "History of Bulgaria" (The Thracian Question after 1878) for the needs of the section "History of the Bulgarian National Question" in the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

The only candidate in the competition, PhD Vanya Petrova Stoyanova, presented her habilitation thesis "The Bulgarians in Turkey (1913-1945)" and 47 other scientific publications – studies, articles and reports, in periodicals and collections. The author has a long research experience on the topic of the competition - the Thracian question after 1878, and a significant production, which also includes the contemporary history of Bulgarian cinema with regard to the idea of socialism in the films of the transition after 1989.

Although the subject of the analysis is an small ethno-religious community at the time, the issues related to it are too diverse, dynamic, complex and controversial, involving various state, church, minority and personal factors, to be a great challenge for the professional historian. It also has its topical references, given the contemporary state of Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage in Turkey, Bulgarian-Turkish relations or the identity of the population that is subject of the study.

Fundamental importance for the understanding of the processes during the period has the forced and mass exodus of ethnic Bulgarians from Eastern Thrace after the Second Balkan War (later called "de-Bulgarization" and even "genocide"), which largely determined the subsequent difficult fate of the Bulgarian presence and material heritage in Ottoman and Republican Turkey until the end of World War II. Based mainly on Bulgarian-language scientific literature and on information from Bulgarian archival sources and press, some of which are used for the first time, the author presents the broad panorama and many details of the chosen topic. The characteristics of the bibliography and sources place an emphasis on political and institutional history with regard to the past of the Bulgarian diaspora, the Bulgarian Church and the Bulgarian nation-state. Undoubtedly, access to Turkish archival sources would not only allow for a broadening of knowledge of historical facts, but also for their interpretations. The "other" point of view is necessary in topics that analyse relations in

the triad "home state" – minority community – host state", even more so when it comes to reciprocal minority presence and migration or refugee issues in inter-state relations.

The title of the monograph points directly and precisely to the main object of the study. The chronology is convincing. The monograph employs the historical method of research, and the structure is based on the problem-chronological approach. The chapter and paragraph headings are concise, directing and precise. The introduction and conclusion successfully present and summarize the content while making connections to the previous and subsequent historical periods.

The author analyzes the international, bilateral, political, military, church, demographic, minority, refugee, educational, cultural, property and other aspects of the marginalized Bulgarian presence in Eastern Thrace and Constantinople/Istanbul during dynamic historical changes. The contributions of the work are as follows: the comprehensive study of the Bulgarian community in Turkey and its place in Bulgarian-Turkish relations; the study of the institution of the "Exarch's Vicarage" in Constantinople, the Exarchate structure and the Exarchate properties in Eastern Thrace; the clarification of the relations between the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Bulgarian state in relation to the diaspora; the tracing of the various manifestations of the Thracian question through the prism of the Bulgarian national question, etc. In the monograph it would have been desirable to pay more attention to the policy of the Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey, on the one hand, and the Bulgarian state – on the other, towards the Muslim minority population in Bulgaria. Comparatively, one could look for analogies and differences with similar links between the "home state" and diaspora developed in the thesis, but with a different address.

The work is written in an academic style, with clear and readable language. The author demonstrates a desire to understand and explain the past in its temporal context, in contrast to the populist handing out of black and white judgements in the public sphere.

Highly appreciating the professional skills and historiographical contributions in the submitted habilitation thesis and the overall scientific production, and taking into account the compliance of the candidature with the normative documents, I vote for the award of the academic position of "Associate Professor" to PhD Vanya Stoyanova.

21/02/2023

Assoc. prof. PhD Blagovest Njagulov