

OPINION

for: the PhD Thesis for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the Department of History and Archaeology of doctoral student Milen Markov, on the topic „Arianism in Southeast Europe in the 4th century“, with a supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zlatomira Gerdzhikova

prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kalin Stoev, member of the Scientific Jury, based on Order No. 138 RD-16 / 02.12.2024 of the Director of IBSCT-BAS Prof. Rумыana Preshlenova.

Brief biographical data about the candidate: PhD student Milen Markov obtained a master's degree in Law at the Burgas Free University in 1998 and legal capacity in 2004. In 2011, he completed a parallel course of study at the Sofia Theological Seminary „Ioan Rilski“, and in 2020 - a course of study at the Plovdiv Orthodox Academy "St. St. Cyril and Methodius". From January 2019 to 2022, when he was discharged with the right to defend, he was a full-time doctoral student in the „Medieval Balkans“ Section of the IBSCT-BAS. The courses, including language courses (Latin and Ancient Greek), that he completed during his studies, developed and deepened his competencies in the field of the research topic and are the basis for successful work.

Characteristics of the dissertation: Milen Markov's dissertation is 300 pages long and consists of an Introduction, five chapters, a Conclusion and a list of references (bibliography).

In the Introduction, the doctoral student outlines in detail the geographical scope, relevance, objectives, methodology of the research, terminology, and sources used. Here, the doctoral student Markov's aspiration for a comprehensive presentation of the foundations of his scientific research, as well as his good familiarity with the main methods and terms imposed in the literature, is impressive. The objectives are correctly argued and place the development of Arianism in Southeast Europe in a general imperial context, which convinces of the significance of the topic.

The first chapter is introductory to the dissertation and presents the emergence and characteristics of the Arian doctrine. The doctoral student traces the different periods of development of the main currents that lead to the crystallization of the creation of the Arian

community in Southeast Europe, which Milen Markov has rightly assessed as a necessary step before clarifying the specific issues related to the entry and development of Arianism in Southeast Europe in the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter Two, "The Religious Policy of the Roman Emperors in the 4th Century Towards Arianism" an overview is given of the imperial policy towards Arianism up to the time of Theodosius I. It is striking that here too the doctoral student tries to offer a detailed classification of the aspects of the issues he deals with, and accordingly presents the actions of the emperors according to four different criteria (p. 72). The main emphasis is placed on the policy towards dogmatic disputes in the 4th century.

Chapter three, "The Entry of Arianism into Southeastern Europe," offers one of the main contributions of the dissertation. Here, I should praise the approach, in which the doctoral student proposes a theoretical model for the spread of Arianism, in which information about individual Arian communities or clerics is considered in their potential contacts with older Arian centers (p. 125). In this way, the information from other thematic areas such as the army and military affairs, trade, etc. in the Empire is drawn into the study, which leads to the conclusion that, in addition to the authority of separate leaders as individuals, Arianism probably found a foothold in the Balkans through lasting connections established by historical development.

Chapter four examines the development of Arianism in the 4th century and contributes by outlining the geographical distribution of Arian centers, while an attempt is made to trace the interactions of the individual episcopal seats.

Chapter five concerns a specific, but important for the overall development of Arianism problem: "The Goths and Arianism in Southeastern Europe". Among the problems discussed here are the location of the so-called "Gothic diocese" and the views of the Gothic bishop Wulfila, with the doctoral student adhering to the conclusion that he belonged to the Omian group.

In summary, it can be said that the text is well-maintained in methodological and scientific terms and shows the doctoral student's ability to use and further develop scientific practices, also a detailed familiarity with the topic and other issues related to it, and the ability to state reasoned hypotheses based on the available information. The dissertation abstract correctly reflects the scientific contributions, which can be summarized on the one hand as

contributions related to the systematization and analysis of significant scientific information, and on the other - contributions to individual problems of Arianism in Southeast Europe.

The above mentioned reasons make me convinced to give an affirmative assessment for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"/PhD to Milen Markov in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology.

Sofia,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kalin Stoev

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