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Българска национална история, vol. IV, Византийското владичество и епохата на Второто българско царство (1018 г. – средина на XV в.), ed. П. ПАВЛОВ [The Bulgarian national history, vol. IV, The Byzantine rule and the epoch of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom (1018 – the mid-fifteenth century), ed. P. PAVLOV], Абагар, Велико Търново 2023, pp. 727.

The book under review appears as the fourth volume in the series of the *Bulgarian national history*, initiated by Professor Grigor Veleв. Its main authors come from two Bulgarian academic centres: the St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo and the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. The first of those centres is represented by Plamen Pavlov, Ivan Lazarov and Anelija Markova, while Georgi N. Nikolov and Krasimir Krăstev represent the second institution. The book also contains texts by Ivan Tjutjundžiev, Venelin Grudkov, Plamen Săbev, Tervel Popov, and – which is particularly worth mentioning from the perspective of the author of this review – Kiril Marinow from the University of Lodz. Marinow's contribution to the volume is a testament to the recognition of his scholarly achievements by Bulgarian scholars.

The work covers the history of the Bulgarian lands from their conquest by Basil II the Bulgarian Slayer to the mid-fifteenth century (the fall of the so-called Despotate of Zagora with its centre in Nesebăr). It is thus clear that the authors do not end their work at the capture of Tarnovo (1393) or Vidin (1396) by the Turks, as it is traditionally ended. Rather, they take their narrative to the actual end of the medieval statehood across the ethno-cultural areas of the Bulgarian nation.

The book is divided into six main parts. Written by Plamen Pavlov and Georgi N. Nikolov, Part 1 (*България под византийска власт, 1018–1086*) [*Bulgaria under Byzantine rule, 1018–1086*, p. 15–108] encompasses the history of the Bulgarian lands under Byzantine rule. It consists of four chapters devoted to social and economic processes, the raids of nomads and their effects, attempts to regain independence, and the Bulgars' spiritual life.

Part 2 discusses the history of the Bulgars in the years 1186–1241 (*Епохата на Велики Асеневици*) [*The Epoch of the Great Asens 1186–1241*, p. 109–262]. Written by Plamen Pavlov, Georgi N. Nikolov, Anelija Markova and Ivan Lazarov, this part is divided into five chapters that cover such issues as: the uprising of Peter Asen and the rebirth of the Bulgarian statehood, the reigns of Kaloyan (1197–1207), Boril (1207–1217), and Ivan Asen II (1217–1241), independent rulers in the Bulgarian lands during the era of the first Asens.

Part 3 provides an account of the history of Bulgaria in the years 1241–1332 (*Пъзящата политическа криза в Българското царство и търсенето на изход от нея*) [*The crawling crisis of the Bulgarian Tsardom and attempts to overcome it, 1241–1232*, p. 263–350]. This part is authored by Ivan Lazarov, Krasimir Krăstev, and Plamen Pavlov. It consists of six chapters.

The first chapter is devoted to the history of Bulgaria in the years 1241–1257, the second to the reign of Konstantin Tih (1257–1277), the third to the life of Ivaylo and his rule, the fourth to the history of Bulgaria in the last two decades of the thirteenth century, the fifth to the reign of Theodore Svetoslav, and the sixth to independent rulers in the Bulgarian lands in the second half of the thirteenth century and the first decades of the fourteenth century.

Part 4 is devoted to the Bulgarian statehood and its various aspects in the period from 1322 to the mid-fifteenth century (*Средновековната българската държавност (1322 г. – средата на XV в.)*) [*The medieval Bulgarian statehood (1322 – the mid-fifteenth century)*], p. 367–506]. Its authors are: Plamen Pavlov, Ivan Tjutjundžiev and Anelija Markova. This part is divided into four sections. The first three sections pertain respectively to the reigns of Michael III Shishman (1323–1330), Ivan Alexander (1330–1371), and Ivan Shishman (1371–1395). The fourth presents the history of Bulgarian lands until the mid-fifteenth century.

Part 5 discusses the society, the church and Bulgarian culture in the period from the end of the twelfth century to the beginning of the fifteenth century (*Общество, църква и култура (краят на XII – началото на XV в.)*) [*Society, the church and culture (the end of the twelfth century – the beginning of the fifteenth century)*], p. 507–665]. The authors of this part are: Plamen Pavlov, Ivan Lazarov, Venelin Grudkov and Plamen Säbev. It is divided into four sections. The first section is devoted to Bulgaria's socio-economic development from the end of the twelfth to the end of the fourteenth

centuries, the second to the history of the Bulgarian church, the third to Bulgaria's literary life and the fourth to its art and architecture.


The sixth part of the book is composed of annexes. The first annex contains Tevel Popov's characterization of the boyars in the Bulgarian lands under Byzantine rule in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The second provides Palamen Pavlov's discussion of the methods of a "psychological war" used in the struggle for independence carried out during the reign of Peter and Asen. The third provides Pavlov's perspective on the Bulgarian state's allies in the northern coasts of the Black Sea, and the fourth annex is devoted to Kirił Marinow's discussion of Tyrnovo as the Bulgars' holy city.

It should be noted that all the chapters and annexes are equipped with bibliographies. The book also contains lots of illustrations.

The work under review provides a comprehensive account of the history of the Bulgars and their state from the beginning of the ninth century to the mid-fifteenth century. Written by distinguished scholars, it will be useful and inspiring both for the experts and for those interested in history whom modern Bulgaria is not short of.

Translated by Artur Mękarski

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