

Supervisor's review

Student: Areg Vardanyan

Thesis title: Mutual Perceptions of Armenians, Greeks and Latins during the Komnenian Era (1081-1185)

Mr Vardanyan's bachelor's thesis *Mutual Perceptions of Armenians, Greeks and Latins during the Komnenian Era (1081-1185)* is an ambitious endeavour. As the title suggests, Mr Vardanyan aimed to explore the mutual perceptions and stereotype formation between three crucial groups – Armenians, Greeks and so-called Latins (i.e. Western crusaders of different origins) – that heavily interacted in the High Middle Ages, especially during the examined era of the Byzantine emperors from the Komnenian dynasty.

In his bachelor's thesis, Mr Vardanyan poses quite a broad research question (*What were the characteristics of mutual perception of Armenians, Greeks and Latins during the Komnenian Era?*) that he attempts to answer by analyzing two chronicles from each side, six in total, covering the chosen time span. Mr Vardanyan has quite a unique advantage to approach this topic; he can read both in Russian and Armenian which allows him to access Armenian primary sources in their original language and also numerous secondary sources in Russian that are often overlooked by the Western scholars (he, unfortunately, doesn't read in Latin or Greek, languages of other primary sources he's working with; but that's quite understandable on the bachelor's level, and he's using reliable translations to English). And his analysis of the primary sources is usually thorough, well-argued and supported by relevant academic literature when available.

However, the thesis suffers from couple of flaws. The most notable one on the first sight is the uneven level of English; while it is not Mr Vardanyan's native language, his thesis is sometimes hard to read due to numerous typing errors, misspellings and especially faulty punctuation. More importantly, the theoretical, methodological and contextual chapters of the thesis are extremely brief, lacking both in structure and content.

I consider it a pity that Mr Vardanyan used so little space on the description of the political, social and economic context of the Komnenian era, and of the interactions between the respective groups. Issues crucial for the understanding of the mutual perceptions such as the crusades or reign and policies of the Komnenian emperors are only presented in a few scarcely sourced paragraphs and demand quite detailed knowledge of the period to even understand what is Mr Vardanyan referring to.

That being said, Mr Vardanyan wrote thesis ambitious (and quite original) in subject and satisfactory in execution; especially in the empirical part where he's efficiently using relevant and rich body of primary sources to answer his research question. He also presents the reader with numerous interesting conclusions or assumptions worthy of further investigation. Therefore, I recommend "B" ("very good") for the final grade.

František Kalenda

Prague, 18.6.2020