

# BOOKS REVIEW

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Tatyana Slavova, *Ruler and Administration in Early Medieval Bulgaria: Philological Perspectives*. Sofia: PAM Publishing Company, 2010, 344 p.

Tatyana Slavova is one of the leading Bulgarian experts in the field of medieval Slavic literary heritage. The majority of her work is dedicated to less studied and completely unexplored linguistic data that she meticulously explores. After a number of exquisite disquisitions on the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Bulgarian translation of the Gospels, *Palăea Interpretata* and on the Slavic tradition of the Old Testament, now she turns her attention to the preserved data on certain early medieval institutions in Bulgaria.

The main part of the book consists of philological research into the Proto-Bulgarian administrative terminology (including the titles of the ruler and of the heir to the throne) that came down to us in various written sources - historical, literary, epigraphic and sphragistic. The dictionaries of the Old Slavic language are just fragmentarily concerned with this matter; in addition, some of the texts that Slavova quotes have never been published or studied from a lexicographical point of view. The Proto-Bulgarian titles scrutinised in this book - over sixty in total - have been brought together for the first time here.

After the works of Veselin Beshevliev and Ivan Venedikov (more than 30 years ago) there has been no other attempt to organise the known data and extract new evidence from primary sources in order to reconstruct the administrative hierarchy in the First Bulgarian Kingdom (7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century). This, together with the expert and profound examination of sources and the detailed philological analysis placed in the context of previous studies, makes this book a valuable achievement in the field of medieval studies in the Slavic realm. The readable style and the efficient synthesis of an enormous amount of information makes the monograph accessible for a broad range of readers - not just specialists, but all those interested in medieval history and culture.

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