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Bulgarian-Latin Marriages during the First Half of the Thirteenth Century

(Abstract)

The study analyses the marital diplomacy between the Latin Empire of Constantinople and Bulgarians. It includes two marriages: the one between the Rhodope ruler Alexios Slav and the daughter of Emperor Henry and the one between Emperor Henry and Tsar Boril's daughter. The author argues that the sources about the marriage between Boril and a niece of Emperor Henry are not reliable enough to consider it an undisputable fact. At the end attention is paid to the 1228 project for marriage between Emperor Baudouin II and Tsar Ivan II Asen's daughter Elena. The author offers some new reading of the sources available and tries to reveal the benefits, advantages and disadvantages of marital policy led between the two countries. Her overall conclusion is that the Latins were more active in the use of marital diplomacy in their relations with the Bulgarians; they set achievable goals and reached them. Bulgarians were a worthy partner because they were able to derive maximum benefit from the marriages, even when they were forced to act in unfavorable conditions. In one case the Bulgarian ruler could dictate terms – as in 1228. Ironically Ivan II Asen failed to take advantage of his superiority, probably because the objective pursued was too high.