

Promotion Review of a Candidate's Application for Associate Professorship

by Prof. Alexandar N. Nikolov, Faculty of History, University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski" on behalf of Vladislav Ivanov Ivanov, the only applicant for the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 2.2: History and Archaeology, Research Area: , advertised in DV 57/26.06.2020.

1. Procedure Information:

The associate professorship competition was announced for the needs of the Department "Medieval Balkans" at the Institute of Balkan Studies with Center of Thracology, BAS. The only applicant for the position is Chief Assist. Prof. Vladislav Ivanov Ivanov. The documents submitted by him meet the requirements of the ZRASRB and in essence provide an opportunity to evaluate his scientific achievements and research and teaching activities.

2. Information for the applicant:

Educational and Professional Record:

Vladislav Ivanov graduated from The National School for Ancient Languages and Cultures "St. Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher"-Sofia in 1998. He obtained his BA degree in Archaeology ("Medieval Archaeology") in 2003 at the Faculty of History, University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2007 he graduated as an MA in Medieval History from the MA program "Byzantium, the Balkans and Medieval Europe", Faculty of History, University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski". He conducted his PhD studies between 2008 and 2011 at the Department of Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History, at the same Faculty and University as above. Meanwhile he specialized at the University of Malta ("Erasmus" program), ASCS-Athens, Greece with an "America for Bulgaria" Foundation grant and at the American Scientific Institute in Istanbul, Turkey with a grant of the same foundation. .

In 2011 he successfully defended a doctoral dissertation on "The Order of the Knights Hospitaller at Rhodes as a Factor in the Balkan Politics (1300-1421)", (Scientific area: Medieval History, "Later Crusades in the 14th-15th Centuries) and subsequently was appointed as Assist.

Professor at the "Medieval Balkans" Department of the Institute of Balkan Studies with Center for Thracology, BAS, being also secretary of the Department. In 2013 he was promoted to the academic position of Chief Assist. Professor at the same Department.

Vladislav Ivanov is active member of the Association of Byzantinologists and Medievalists in Bulgaria. His research activities are focused mainly at Balkan and General Medieval History, especially the History of the Eurasian nomads, early Ottoman expansion and the anti-Ottoman crusades. The main accent of his research, however, remains the topic of the Knights of St. John and their role in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the Balkans throughout the Late Middle Ages.

The research of the candidate would be discussed separately and in detail later, however, I have to mention that the candidate meets completely the minimal national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor" and therefore has the right to participate in the competition and in case of successful performance, to hold this academic position.

Vladislav Ivanov has rich professional record, with plenty of participations in international projects and conferences. According to the application he took part in five major projects of BAS and the University of Sofia, most of them with international participation. He participated also at 21 scientific events in Bulgaria and abroad, among them the 22th and 23th Congresses of Byzantine Studies, respectively in Sofia (2011) and Belgrade (2016). The applicant has also plenty of presentations and public lectures, some of them under the auspices of the Embassy of the Sovereign Order of Malta in Sofia. He is author of reviews in prestigious scientific editions and editor of "Almanah" journal and two prestigious scientific collections of articles.

2. Description of applicant's scientific works and achievements:

Vladislav Ivanov presented rich scientific production for the participation at the competition. It includes one monograph "The Knights of St. John, the Crusades and the Balkans (11th-13th Centuries)", Sofia, 2020. (in Bulgarian) and a chapter "The Military Order of the Hospitallers and the Balkans (1204-1421) of a collective monograph "The Western Expansion in the Balkans, the Military Orders and the Italian Maritime Republics, 12th-15th Centuries", together with Al. Nikolov, N. Dyulgerov, S. Hinkovski, K. Yordanov. (1204–1421)". Moreover, the candidate presents more than

30 studies and articles, revealing his extremely broad scope of research and erudition. In addition, he presented several valuable translations from Latin into Bulgarian of sources, significant for his research.

Central part in candidate's research occupies the topic of the Knights Hospitaller and their activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. It is an expected outcome, considering the topic of his doctoral dissertation. As a result of this research we have the monumental monograph "The Knights of St. John, The Crusades and the Balkans (11th-13th Centuries)", 501 pp. This work presents in detail the history of the Order of St. John in the given chronological frames and is to a certain extent a continuation of his dissertation topic, dedicated to the Order's activity in the 14th and the 15th centuries in the same geographical, historical and cultural space.

Thus, Bulgarian and world Medieval Studies receive a full-blooded picture of the Knights of St. John's activity in the region. Vladislav Ivanov is absolutely exhaustive in his research and lays solid foundation for further research in this direction. The monograph includes an introductory part that introduces us to the history of the Order in the context of the Crusades in general. The last four chapters examine in detail the role of the Knights Hospitaller in the Balkans during the period in question, in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, the Latin Empire and other Latin dominions in the Balkans, through the prism of their relations to the Balkan states, Eurasian nomads and other communities in contact with the Order. The monograph is accompanied by many valuable translations of sources that have not yet been translated into Bulgarian and at the same time provide solid support for the author's theses set out in his work. In general, the monograph "The Knights of St. John, the Crusades and the Balkans (11th-13th Centuries)" is a serious contribution to Bulgarian and world Medieval Studies and would be wonderful if it soon got an English translation and publisher.

The topic of the Knights of St. John is also related to the chapter "The Military Monastic Order of Hospitallers and the Balkans (1204 -1421)" from the collective monograph "Western Expansion of the Balkans: Military Monastic Orders and the Italian Maritime Republics 12th cen-15th Centuries", which is the result of UHC project "Alma Mater" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ". Here Vladislav Ivanov chronologically combined the history of the Order of the Balkans from the emergence of the Latin Empire to the first quarter of the 15th century, tracing the main trends of its activities related to its gradual establishment as an important factor and agent of Western expansion in the region, after the transformation of Rhodes

into its main center, providing it with a stable base and military-strategic advantage for decades to come. This chapter again demonstrates the solid scientific approach and skills of Vladislav Ivanov and reveals him as an established professional who masters in detail the topic he studies, is able to analyze in depth the source base and present it in a fascinating and readable way to academic and wider audiences. .

The topics of Vladislav Ivanov's research are rich and diverse, presented through over 30 studies and articles about the competition. It can be divided into the following main topics:

1. The topics of the history of the Knights of St. John and the Crusades in general. These include publications in English and Bulgarian, devoted to individual episodes and longer periods in the history of Hospitallers in the Balkans and in the context of the Crusades, the anti-Ottoman coalitions in which they participated, as well as more general research on military monastic orders, including the fate of the Hospitaller and Templar captives after the fateful battle of Hattin in 1187. Some of these publications are integrated in the monograph submitted for the competition.

Among the publications in English I would mention in particular "The Knights Hospitaller of Rhodes and their Involvement in the Balkan Political Affairs (1300-1421 AD)" from 2016 and "The Ottoman Expansion on the Balkans and the Crusade of the Master Fr. Juan Fernandez de Heredia "from 2012. Among the publications in Bulgarian in this thematic circle should be especially mentioned, "The" Holy League of 1332-1336 / 7 as a factor in the regional policy in the Eastern Mediterranean "from 2012, and "The" Greek "project of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem" from 2012.

2. The second thematic round is related to the history of the Eurasian nomads and in particular of the Cumans, a topic that has been very popular worldwide in recent decades. Vladislav Ivanov presents interesting and original research on this issue, especially related to the relations of the Knights of St. John with representatives of the Eurasian nomadic population. Problems related to the history of the Tatars in the Bulgarian lands, the relations of the First Bulgarian Czar with the nomads during the Bulgarian-Byzantine duel and many more issues are also presented in this thematic circle.

3. The third group of articles and studies is devoted to various topics, starting with the history of the Patarens and the Bogomils, going through the etymology of the name "Nergissa" and reaching the actions of the Saracen pirates in the Aegean in the 8th-9th centuries. and several excellent translations, including Ibn Battuta's study of Turkey. This part also hints at future directions of the candidate's scientific activity.

The general impression of the scientific production of Ch. Assistant Professor Ivanov is that it is not only impressive in volume, but also distinguished by excellent quality, variety and precision. The rich variety of his scientific interests in the field of Medieval Studies is promising for even more fruitful scientific activity in the future, already in his capacity as a habilitated lecturer and scientist.

3. Conclusion:

The teaching, scientific and project activity of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Vladislav Ivanov Ivanov fully comply with the requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" according to the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules of BAS for its implementation. Based on this circumstance, I have the pleasure to propose to the esteemed jury to award the academic position of "Associate Professor" to Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Vladislav Ivanov Ivanov in the professional field 2.2. History and Archeology and wish the candidate future professional success

29th of October, 2020

Sofia

Signature:



(Prof. Alexandar Nikolov, PhD)