

Promotion Review

by Assoc. Prof. Nadezhda Naydenova Hristova,
St Cyril and St Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo,
on behalf of Dr. Vladislav Ivanov Ivanov, the only applicant
for the associate professor position in Professional Field 2.2. History and
Archaeology, Research Area: General Medieval History,
as advertised in *Darzhaven Vestnik* 55/19.06.2020.

1. Information about the competition

In my opinion all the terms and procedures related to the announcement of vacancy for the position of associate professor at the Section "Mediaeval Balkans" of the Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology "Prof. Alexander Fol" at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences have been observed. The only applicant for the position is Senior Assistant Prof. Vladislav Ivanov Ivanov, PhD. It is obvious from the accurately prepared documents that the applicant suits all the requirements stipulated in the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Appendix to the Regulations of the Scholarly Council at the Institute of Balkan Studies: Dr. Ivanov has a PhD in the professional field of the competition; he has held the position of S Assistant Professor for 7 years; the applied information verifies that he meets the requirements stipulated in article 2b, paragraph 2 and 3 of LDASRB.

2. Information about the applicant

Senior Assist. Prof. Dr. Vladislav Ivanov Ivanov has a bachelor's degree from St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia in the speciality of Archaeology (2003) and also an MA in General Medieval History from the same university (2007). In the period from 2008 until 2011 Vladislav Ivanov was a PhD student at Sofia University and in 2011 successfully defended his PhD thesis „Орденът на хоспиталиерите на Родос като фактор в балканската политика (1300–

1421)“ [“The Order of Knights Hospitaller in Rhodes as a Factor in Balkan Politics (1300–1421)”. From 2011 until 2013 he was an Assistant Professor in Medieval history at the Institute of Balkan Studies. Since 2013 he has occupied the academic position of Senior Assistant Professor and a secretary of the Section “Medieval Balkans” at the Institute of Balkan Studies.

3. Scholarly research achievements and contributions

The required limited content of the promotion review compels me to only outline the main achievements of Dr. Ivanov as a researcher. The scholarly works presented by him are in the subject field of the competition and include the monograph „Рицарите йоанити, кръстоносните походи и Балканите (XI–XIII в.)” [“The Knights of Saint John, the Crusades and the Balkans (the 11th – 13th centuries)”), published by the Institute of Balkan Studies in 2020, and 29 articles and studies.

The presented book is a profound investigation of the history of the Order of the Knights Hospitaller in the context of the history of the crusades in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans in the 11th – 13th centuries. The theme about the presence of the Order in Southeast Europe in 12th – 13th centuries, which is leading in the last four chapters of the book, has not been studied thoroughly in world historiography. The research is composed of introduction, conclusion and eleven chapters, which could be differentiated structurally and logically into two parts. The first part is devoted to the presenting of the history of the Order on the background of the course of development of the crusades until the end of the 13th century (chapters I–VII). In the text, the author has studied the transformation of the Order of Hospitaller of Jerusalem into a military-religious order with an international scope thanks to the conquests of the first crusaders. Special attention has been paid to the first proofs of the Order’s militarization. Dr. Ivanov defends the thesis that the development of this process considerably increased the role of the knights Hospitaller as a significant political factor in the Eastern

Mediterranean until the end of 13th century. On the background of the conflict between the crusaders and Saladin, the author reveals the role of the Order as one of the main strongholds for the Christian Outremer lands in its capacity of an organization with predominantly military nature.

The second part of the monograph is based on a thoroughly studied and analysed source material. It is devoted to investigating the problem of the presence of the knights Hospitaller in Southeast Europe in the 12th – 13th centuries and their intervention in the crusader politics pursued in the region. Special attention has been paid to the development of the relations between the Balkan Orthodox states, the Latin world and the crusader polities in the Balkans and the Near East. On the basis of detailed investigation of the preserved sources, the reasons for the interest of the Order towards the Balkans and for the establishing of the knights of Saint John in the Hungarian Kingdom and Byzantium in the 12th century are examined. Various proofs of the presence of the Order in the Latin states founded in the Balkan peninsula after the Fourth Crusade are analysed. The theme of the interference of the knights Hospitaller in the conflict between the Latin Empire and the Eastern Orthodox states is studied in details. Dr. Ivanov has come to the conclusion that the main reason for the conflict were the activities of the Roman Emperor Frederick II who was in alliance with the Balkan Orthodox coalition. The last chapter of the book is devoted to the history of the knights of Saint John in the lands of the Hungarian crown and the involvement of the local branch of the Order in the Hungarian politics regarding the Orthodox territories in the Balkans and the Latin Empire.

The second part of the monograph contributes for elucidating events, relations and influences in the Balkans in the complicated political situation during the 13th and starting 14th century. It is beyond doubt that an interesting and valuable part of the book are the translations of historical sources of the epoch with comments and references. The texts are translated for the first time in Bulgarian by Dr. Ivanov.

The articles and studies presented by Senior Assist. Prof. Ivanov could be differentiated into several thematic fields. The greater part of them (11 of all the 29) are devoted to investigating problems related to the history of the military-religious orders and most of all to the history of the Order of the Knights Hospitaller. The titles presented by the author demonstrate his lasting interest in the subject-matter and are proof for his profound work with slightly known historical sources. As a result of the analysis of various source material and research works Dr. Ivanov presents interesting observations and conclusions. In his paper „The Knights Hospitaller of Rhodes and their Involvement in the Balkan Political Affairs (1300–1421 AD)” he comes to the conclusion that during the period investigated in the research the activities of the Order served as a considerable obstacle before the Ottoman invasion and supported the struggle for survival of the Balkan Orthodox states. In another paper („Гръцкият“ проект на ордена на св. Йоан Йерусалимски“ [The “Greek” Project of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem]), the author discusses the reasons for the failure of the so-called “Greek” Project of the knights Hospitaller, whose main purpose was the imposing of the Order’s power over the greatest part of continental Greece. In the study „Свещената лига от 1332–1336/7 г. като фактор в регионалната политика в Източното Средиземноморие“ [The Holy League of 1332–1336/7 as a Factor in the Regional Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean], V. Ivanov presents a well-grounded defence of the idea that the activities undertaken by the Holy League were the first crusade against the Ottoman advance towards Europe and that they had long-lasting impact on the political destiny of the region. A thorough analysis of the circumstances related to the efforts of Pope Gregory XI (1370–1378) to organize a crusade together with the knight Hospitaller Juan Fernández de Heredia whom the Pope proclaimed leader of the crusaders and the Order in 1377, is presented in the article under the title „The Ottoman Expansion on the Balkans and the Crusade of the Master Fr. Juan Fernandez de Heredia“.

The chronology of the events and the consequences of the crusaders' defeat in 1378 are discussed in the paper.

The second thematic field of research outlined by another group of papers by Dr. Ivanov (five in number) includes research works on different moments of the history of nomadic societies (Cumans, Tartars) that in their migrations to the West reached the lands of medieval Bulgaria and the Balkans. The study „По границите на християнска Европа: степните номади и „цивилизованите“ държави, светът „отвъд реките, горите и планините“ през XII“ [Along the Borders of Christian Europe: The Steppe Nomads and the “Civilized” States, the World “beyond the Rivers, Forests and Mountains in the 12th c.”] is devoted to the history of nomadic tribes inhabiting the steppe territories to the north of the Black Sea and their relations with the neighbouring Christian states in the 12th c. Periods of the history of the Cumans are object of investigation in two other studies: „Разгромът на куманите от монголите през първата половина на XIII в. Pax Cumanica от Волга до Дунав като щит на християнска средновековна Европа“ [The Defeat of the Cumans by the Mongols in the First Half of the 13th c. Pax Cumanica from the Volga to the Danube as a Shield to Medieval Christian Europe] in which historic sources are discussed with information about the role of the Cuman tribes as defenders of Christian Europe from the more aggressive steppe nomads during the 11th – 13th centuries; „Миграцията на куманите на Балканите в края на 30-те и началото на 40-те години на XIII в.“ [The Migrations of the Cumans in the Balkans at the End of the 1230s and the Beginning of the 1240s] in which, on the basis of an analysis of source material for the movements of the Cumans towards the Balkans in the middle of the 13th c., the author defends the thesis that in the period from 1238 until 1243, there were no less than three different migrations of Cumans in the territories of the Bulgarian Kingdom and other Balkan states.

A third group of papers demonstrates Dr. Ivanov's interest in problems related to conflicts in the Christian world, to the struggle for political and religious

superiority over the lands along the Lower Danube in the 13th – 14th centuries, to heretical teachings, to the confrontation of Christianity and Islam in the Western Mediterranean in the 8th – 10th centuries, etc. In the article „Как се разделя християнският свят? Начало на конфронтацията между православния Изток и католическия Запад“ [How Did the Christian World Split? The Beginning of the Confrontation between the Orthodox East and the Catholic West], the idea is defended that the hostility between the western and the eastern branch of Christianity escalated only in the period between 1182 and 1204. According to V. Ivanov the most important events, which provoked the origin of the hostility were the massacre of the Latin merchants in Constantinople in 1182 and the capture of the Byzantine capital by the armies of the Fourth Crusade in 1203 and 1204. In the paper „Ереста на българите и патарените в Chronica Majora на Матю Парис“ [The Heresy of the Bulgarians and Patarenes in Chronica Majora by Matthew Paris], the author discusses information in up to now overlooked passages from the above mentioned chronicle about the spreading of medieval dualistic heresies in Western Europe in the second quarter of the 13th c. In the paper „Сарацинските пирати и „Свещената война“ в Западното Средиземноморие през VIII–X в.“ [The Saracenian Pirates and the Holy War in the Western Mediterranean in the 8th – 10th c.] an interesting idea is defended: the campaigns against the Saracenian pirates in those centuries could be considered predecessors of the later crusades.

The scholarly works presented by Senior Assist. Prof. Ivanov are of high professional quality. I would like to point out several of his scholarly contributions: the profound investigation of the history of the knights Hospitaller and their political role in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans from 1204 until 1421; the inquiry into various problems of the history of these geographical regions and the crusades, related to the above mentioned thematic field; analysis of information about the so-called “Greek” project of the Order; the attempt at elucidating the chronology of historical moments of the relations between the

Latin world and the Balkan states in connection with the subject matter of the presented monograph; the thorough study of the history of the nomads along the borders of the Christian world in the 12th – 13th centuries; and last but not least – the translations and comments of medieval sources presented by Senior Assist. Prof. Ivaniv.

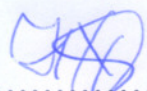
A proof for the scholarly progress of Dr. Ivanov is the fact that he has taken part in 10 international and 7 national scholarly forums since 2011, as well as in 2 international projects, 2 projects of the Institute of Balkan Studies, and 1 project of St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia.

The academic progress of Senior Assist. Prof. Ivanov is demonstrated by the presented information about citations of his publications in the research works of home and foreign authors: 8 citations all together, of which 2 by two Bulgarian authors and 6 by two foreign authors.

Conclusion

The publications of Senior Assist. Prof. Vladislav Ivanov Ivanov, with their number and scope of research, and his unquestionable scholarly progress give me good reason to recommend with conviction to the honoured members of the Scholarly Committee to confer on him the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology.

28th of October 2020


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(Assoc. Prof. Nadezhda Hristova)