

SCIENTIFIC OPINION of Prof. Ilia G. Iliev from IIST-BAN

regarding a competition for the occupation of the academic position "docent" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.2. History and archeology (Political and economic development of the Balkans in the 11th - 12th centuries) for the needs of the "Medieval Balkans" section at the IBCT-BAS, announced in SG no. 7/ 24.01.2023

Only one candidate appeared at the competition - chief assistant. Dr. Georgi Nikolov Dimov. His documents were in order and the relevant commission for applicants of the competition allowed him to participate.

Dr. Dimov holds a master's degree in history and archeology from the University of St. Kliment Ohridski". After successfully completing full-time doctoral studies at the same university, he obtained the educational and scientific degree "doctor". After that, he started working as an assistant in the "Medieval Balkans" section of the Institute of Balkan Studies with a center of thracology at the BAS, where in 2016 he acquired the scientific title of "chief assistant". From the end of 2022, he works half-time and as the main assistant in the history of Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Middle Ages at the University of Library Science and Information Technology.

The participant in the competition has submitted documents that show that he fully meets the requirements of the relevant legal provisions to aspire to the acquisition of the scientific title of "associate professor". Behind him is a solid university training, a large number of articles, studies, reports, reviews published in our and foreign scientific publications. He participated in a number of scientific forums on the issues he researched at home and abroad and is already well known both in the Bulgarian and the international part of the medievalist college. This is clearly evident not only from the list of his participation in scientific forums, but also from his publications, and not least from the discovered citations of his writings. There is also the so-called Certificate of fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2, 3 and 5 of ZRASRB - a remarkable contribution of the new era in the fight against formalism in science. Anyway, on this indicator too, Dr. Dimov has collected many more than the required "points".

At the current competition, Chief Assistant Dr. Georgi Dimov appeared with ten works - one monograph, seven articles and two studies, each of which fully corresponds to the theme of the competition announced in the State Gazette. And not only this. In general, the candidate's research covers separate issues of the socio-economic history of the Balkans during the Komnenian era, the demographic and settlement development of the region. A large part of the analysis of the source material (by the way, extremely unevenly covering the individual parts of the region in different periods of the researched era and in the individual aspects of interest to the researcher) and the conclusions that Dr. Dimov made are also present in his habilitation work on "The Balkan World in the Age of the Komnenians (1081-1185)". This undoubtedly condenses the text of the monographic composition and presents it as a logical conclusion (or at least an important intermediate phase) in the realization of the researcher's scientific interests.

My opinion on the current competition was naturally built mainly on the qualities of the habilitation thesis of the assistant professor. Dr. Georgi Dimov, quoted above. On the whole, it is a comprehensive in some respects account of the time of the Komnenians. Emphasis is placed on the "geographical factor" (with one paragraph referring to demographics!); on the "material world" (agriculture and urban economy, cities) and on the "political history" of the period.

The author has a preference for cultural and economic history and this is clearly disclosed and reflected in the structure of the text. At the same time, the marked political events (of domestic or international nature) complete the picture of the Byzantine Balkan world of the considered era and are the necessary canvas for unfolding and directing the research in the direction chosen by its author. Dr. Dimov has the ambition to base his theses (and hypotheses) mainly on source material, but he also knows the literature - classical and newer on various special issues (which is evident not only from the list of works used, but also from the very fabric of the study). I can't ignore the obvious desire to interpret the matter in a language as readable and accessible as possible without compromising the purely scientific nature of the research. This, by the way, is also one of the signs of an already achieved routine in a given field of scientific research.

What can be said about the contributions of the considered habilitation thesis? According to an old bureaucratic custom, the participants in such scientific competitions are

obliged to outline their own contributions on the topic of the competition. In the reference compiled by the author, Dr. Dimov, it is emphasized that the author's research is aimed at "a number of under-researched problems in medieval studies and Byzantine studies". Without going into detail, I will not fully agree that the Komnenian Age is just such an area. And Dr. Dimov's monographic work is undoubtedly a well-formed review/analysis of many interesting features of this era with an attempt to emphasize the Balkan territory and the population living on it in the period under consideration. In my opinion, the work contains enough serious contributions on the topic of the competition and not only that - it shows in a categorical way that the participant in the procedure has all the necessary qualities to be chosen to occupy the academic position of "associate professor".

Therefore, I am fully convinced that I will vote in favor of such a decision of the Scientific Jury, in which I participate, and I call on the Scientific Council of IBCT - BAS to elect the Chief Assistant. Dr. Georgi Nikolov Dimov for "associate professor" for the needs of the "Medieval Balkans" section at the same scientific institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Sofia, May 20, 2023

Prof. DSc Ilia G. Iliev