**REVIEW**

In connection with the announcement by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski” competition for the academic position of professor for the needs of the Faculty of History, published in the „Darzaven vestnik“, issue 96 / 19.11.2021,

Direction 2.2. History and archeology (Bulgarian historiography - Historical periodicals)

with the only candidate

**Assoc. Prof. PhD TODOR ALEKSANDROV POPNEDELEV**

by **Prof. PhD Plamen Hristov Pavlov**

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For participation in the announced competition, documents have been submitted by one candidate - Assoc. Prof. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev, lecturer at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski ”. The Commission for Review of Documents has established that those submitted in connection with the competition meet all regulatory requirements. This is correctly reflected in the documentation submitted in connection with this procedure.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Popnedelev was born on March 16, 1957. In 1979-1984 he graduated in history, master's degree, specializing in Balkan history and a second major in philosophy at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ”. In the period 1986-1990 he was a full-time graduate student (doctoral student) at the Sofia University. In 1990 he defended his dissertation and received the scientific and educational degree "Candidate of Historical Sciences" (PhD). He won a competition for an assistant in the Sofia University, successively passed through the degrees of senior and chief assistant, and in 2005 he was habilitated as an associate professor. In 2007-2015 Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev was Deputy Dean of the Faculty of History at Sofia University, and in 2015 he was elected Dean of the Faculty. Together with his administrative, teaching and research activities, Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev works as chairman of the International Bulgarian Studies Association. Under his leadership, the Third International Congress of Bulgarian Studies was held (May 2013). Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev is a member of the editorial boards of scientific collections and thematic publications, as well as of the magazine "Minalo". Last but not least, we would like to note that the candidate in this competition is a well-known name in historical science, incl. and from his participation in a number of national and international scientific forums, incl. and as an organizer given the activity of the Faculty of History of Sofia University in this direction.

Assoc. Prof. Todor Popnedelev participated in the current competition with 16 scientific publications from the period 1989-2022. The original scientific contributions contained in them, which will be discussed below, are described correctly by the candidate in the presented report. According to the requirements, publications have been selected that do not relate to the habilitation of Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev in 2005, and the majority of them have been realized in the period after it. In the first place in the list of the scientific publications of Assoc. Prof. Todor Popnedelev presented in connection with this competition is his habilitation work, which is essentially a scientific monograph. Its title is "Bulgarian Middle Ages in the pages of the Yearbook of Sofia University. Faculty of History and Philology (1905-1945). Sofia, University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski ”, 2022, 199 pages ISBN 978-954-07-5381-2

The monograph presented to our attention consists of a preface, an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and an appendix. In his Preface, the author draws attention to the importance of the authoritative scientific periodical he researches, and a kind of scientific forum where the leading names in Bulgarian medieval studies publish their research. In addition, Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev gives a definition of historiography as a scientific discipline, emphasizing its epistemological, axeological and prognostic functions. In this regard, a brief overview of Bulgarian medieval studies after the Liberation with its directions is presented. Here are the parameters of the study - medieval studies published in the „Godishnik“/"Yearbook of Sofia University" from 1905 to 1945, respectively, these are the works of 13 authors who published 45 studies and articles on the medieval history of Bulgaria. For its part, the period of Ottoman rule in the Bulgarian lands is covered by 4 publications by three authors. As Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev rightly points out, the publications dedicated to the history of medieval Bulgaria occupy a leading place compared to other studies on the pages of GSU. As the main task of his research, Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev sets the analysis of the scientific works published at GSU in terms of their scientific characteristics, as well as the efforts of the authors leading the names of the then Bulgarian historical science.

In the Introduction T. Popnedelev gives a brief overview of the idea of ​​establishing the GSU and the actions of the Academic Council for its implementation in the period 1895–1905. In the First Chapter (First Bulgarian State) 19 publications are considered, divided into three sections. The first part includes two articles by Vasil Zlatarski: "History of the Bulgarians from their appearance in Europe to the founding of the Bulgarian kingdom on the Balkan Peninsula"and "Nationalization of the Bulgarian state and church in the IX century." These are important scientific texts that lay the foundations of the fundamental "History of the Bulgarian state in the Middle Ages" / vol. I, parts 1-2 / of the "patriarch" of Bulgarian medieval studies. The other study considered in this part is by P. Mutafchiev: "The Magyars and the Bulgarian-Byzantine relations in the third quarter of the X century" - the study is dedicated to the Bulgarian-Byzantine conflict of 967 and the Hungarian invasions of the Balkans, which began in 934. In itself, it marks the beginning of the study of this important issue, which is noted by Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev in a convincing way. Here however we will allow ourselves to make a recommendation given the term "First" used by the author, respectively, "Second Bulgarian State" - although "First" and "Second Bulgarian Empire" are also criticized by some authors, it seems to us It is said that they better reflect the historical facts, and are in line with our own tradition, reflected in the works of our classics V. Zlatarski, P. Mutafchiev and others, who are among the main "heroes" in this work, as well as in the scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev. The second part of the First Chapter includes 7 publications by V. Beshevliev and one by I. Ivanov, which present important sources on Bulgarian history. V. Beshevliev's articles are dedicated to the Bulgarian (the first Bulgarian, as he calls them) inscriptions, incl. those of the Madara Horseman. In the article "The New Source for the Defeat of Nicephorus I in Bulgaria in 811" Beshevliev criticizes the mistakes in publishing the so-called Anonymous Vatican story. The study or rather the monograph of I. Ivanov "Lives of St. Ivan Rilski ” is another fundamental scientific text published in GSU, which determines the direction of future research on the topic and this is rightly pointed out by Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev.

The third part of the First Chapter is dedicated to the linguistic publications of the prominent scholars Stefan Mladenov, Veselin Beshevliev, Dimitar Dechev, Yanko Todorov and Dimitar Krundjalov: issues from the history of the Bulgarian language, incl. traces of the language of the proto-Bulgarians; the origin and meaning of the name "Bulgarians", / proto / Bulgarian calendar, etc. St. Mladenov also dwells on the famous treasure of Nagy Saint Miklos and the inscriptions on some of the vessels in it. A proper place is given to D. Krundzhalov's studies of the old Bulgarian shafts, although the views of this author have been refuted by later researchers. On the other hand, this is what allows Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev to acquaint the reader with the discussions on the topic, especially in that era. The second chapter of Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev's work is entitled "Second Bulgarian State" (pp. 83-129), again in three parts. In the first of them are studied and analyzed studies and articles of V. Zlatarski, three in number, and P. Nikov, two publications on scientific issues related to the history of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. As Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev notes, these scientific texts of V. Zlatarski are included directly in the third volume of "History of the Bulgarian state in the Middle Ages", which can be explained by the fact that the volume was published after the death of V. Zlatarski. Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev focuses on the article of the prominent Bulgarian medievalist, dedicated to the donor inscription in the Boyana Church (GSU-IFF, 31, 1934-1935, 1-29), Zlatarski's latest scientific work, placed in GSU. Two publications by Petar Nikov are also considered: "Tatar-Bulgarian relations in the Middle Ages, in view of the reign of Smilets" and "History of the Vidin principality until 1323”, whose scientific significance is rightly noted by Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev. The second part of Chapter Two includes the publications of historical sources for the era of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom: two articles by Benyo Tsonev and one each by P. Nikov and Iv. Duychev. As noted by the author, these publications have their place in the study of important issues of the medieval past of Bulgaria, and published by Ivan Duychev "The file of Pope Innocent III with the Bulgarians. Introduction, text and notes. ” One of the most important sources for the Second Kingdom and its foreign policy, especially in the time of Tsar Kaloyan. The third part of the Second Chapter presents the linguistic article of St. Mladenov for the inscription from the Boyana Church, which has already been mentioned. The third chapter entitled "Problems of the Bulgarian Middle Ages" examines and comments on scientific publications on specific events and processes - three by P. Mutafchiev and one each by J. Ivanov and V. Zlatarski, in the second - two articles by D. Dechev and B. Tsonev. The third part analyzes 3 studies by B. Tsonev, D. Dechev and J. Todorov, relating to the Middle Ages as a whole. With good reason Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev devotes a serious place to the polemical study of P. Mutafchiev "Bulgarians and Romanians in the history of the Danube lands" - a reaction to the manipulative presentation of Bulgarian-Romanian relations in the Middle Ages by N. Yorga. T. Popnedelev rightly notes that the Bulgarian scientist in some cases "strictly" leaves the academic tone, which is fully understandable given the extremely biased approach of the Romanian historian and politician to the Bulgarian past - a circumstance that turns science into malicious propaganda. In the fourth part of the third chapter are considered works focused on problems of historical knowledge - a total of 6 publications by P. Nikov, P. Mutafchiev, St. George, B. Primov and R. Rusev. Since it is not possible, and hardly necessary, to make a full review of the scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev, we will pay special attention to his presentation of the conceptual study of P. Mutafchiev - one of his works, which won him recognition as a philosopher of history. Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev rightly places emphasis on the current and modern science problem of the so-called Byzantine feudalism, which is one of the central ones for P. Mutafchiev. In his commentary, Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev also drew attention to the unfortunate article by P. Petrov from 1952, as well as to the objective position of V. Gyuzelev, paying tribute to the great Bulgarian scientist. T. Popnedelev also notes the views of P. Mutafchiev on the so-called Byzantinism and its influence in medieval Bulgaria - a topic interpreted by P. Mutafchiev in a very extreme form, which is not accepted in modern science.

The conclusion of the book of T. Popnedelev is a summary of his observations and conclusions. We must emphasize that the author often goes beyond the "purely" historiographical review, which deserves a positive assessment. Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev carefully analyzed the academic community in the then Bulgaria, paying attention to the development of Bulgarian society after the Liberation, including historical science. The author rightly claims: “The responsibility (of the scientists commented by him and their publications in GSU - my note, PP) to science and the belief in its role as an instrument for realistic knowledge of the world build the stable foundation of Bulgarian medievalism. The authors write responsibly not only to their contemporaries, but also to future generations. Life of Bulgarians in the Middle Ages… "In any case, with his analyzes and specific conclusions, the researcher T. Popnedelev convinces us that the pages of the" Yearbook of Sofia University "find the most important discoveries and contributions of Bulgarian science in the study of the Bulgarian Middle Ages. - an indisputable achievement for the Bulgarian humanities not only academically but also socially. The bibliography at the end of the book is executed precisely. Useful and relevant is also biobibliographic information about the authors, whose scientific work is the subject of analysis on the pages of the presented monograph of Todor Popnedelev.

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In connection with the current competition, Assoc. Prof. Todor Popnedelev presents fifteen other publications that have relatively diverse topics. Of course, for the most part they are on topics and specific scientific problems in which the candidate in this competition has a lasting interest and scientific contributions in his previous works. Among these publications we want to note the two-part text "A look at the development of Bulgarian historiography in the twentieth century." the beginning of the XX century ", the study of the state policy towards the cultural-historical heritage / 1878-1989 /, the article" Myths in the thinking of the historian ", the prefaces (essentially introductory studies) to the lectures of V. Zlatarski and the collection in memory of Acad. D. Angelov, etc. In our opinion, Assoc. Prof. Todor Popnedelev could have included other texts, incl. his interviews (essentially of the "survey" type, if we follow the manner of literary historians) with Bulgarian scholars in recent years. In them, among everything else, we can see the handwriting of a proven connoisseur of historiographical "matter", such as Popnedelev is without a doubt. The presented articles have an original character and contain a number of scientific contributions, some of which we have already mentioned in the course of the exhibition.

In view of what has been said so far, I strongly vote "FOR" the award of the academic position of "Professor" to Assoc. Prof. PhD Todor Alexandrov in the field of History and Archeology (Bulgarian Historiography - Historical Periodicals), professional field 2.2. History and archeology.

22.02. 2022

Veliko Tarnovo Prof. PhD Plamen Pavlov