

## REVIEW

by **Slavia Barlieva, PhD, Professor at the Cyril and Methodius Research Center at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences**

of the materials submitted in a procedure for obtaining the academic position "Associate Professor" in a professional field 2.1. Philology (Classical Languages)

In the selection procedure for the academic position "Associate Professor" in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Classical Languages), promulgated in the State Gazette. no. 21 of 15.03.2022 for the needs of Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, documents were submitted by Assistant Professor Tsvetan Stefanov Vasilev, PhD (the only applicant). As a member of the scientific jury, approved by order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" No RD-38-201 / 27.4.2022 and elected as a reviewer at its first meeting, I appreciate that the scientific publications of the candidate, his applied scientific , and teaching contributions presented in the procedure cover the necessary prerequisites for employment to the academic position of "Associate Professor". Dr Vasilev fully meets the conditions for holding this position set out in Art. 105, v. 1-5. of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "": he holds a scientific and educational degree“ Doctor ”, has held the academic position of “ Assistant Professor”for 5 years, presented a published monograph, which is completely different in subject and object of study from those of his PhD and there is no plagiarism in his scientific works.

Tsvetan Vasilev received his scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in 2016 with a dissertation on " Language features of the Greek inscriptions in the wall paintings of churches with bilingual inscriptions from 17th century in Bulgaria", published in a supplemented and revised version by University Press "St. Kliment Ohridski "":“ *The Greek language in the churches with mixed inscriptions from the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Bulgaria - epigraphic repertoire, language features, writing methods* ”(2017). This work for the first time presents 225 inscriptions on frescoes from 18 churches and their linguistic and functional features. It is an outstanding contribution both from a linguistic point of view and in terms of art history in the Bulgarian lands. The topic is present in subsequent scientific publications of Dr Vasilev, in some cases in co-authorship with authoritative art historians. They show again his research as a valuable tool for epigraphic and art studies based on in-depth knowledge of postclassical Greek and its sociolinguistic functions, post-Byzantine epigraphy and palaeography, liturgy and iconography. In addition to the dissertation and the book based on it, 8 more articles and 1 chapter from a monothematic collection, dealing with specific issues on the topic in the perspective of wall painting, textology, hagiography and Greek-Bulgarian bilingualism during the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, belong to this part of his scientific work. For the first time the phenomenon of bialfabetism is identified and characterized and the function of the Greek texts in the studied inscriptions is defined mainly as a decorative element of the general sacred message of the church monumental painting.

For this procedure, it is important to indicate the candidate's contributions, attested in his most important publications, but the main emphasis is placed on the work presented as the main in

the competition - the two-volume monograph of Tsvetan Vassilev *Petrus Deodatus / Peter Bogdan - De Antiquitate paterni soli et de rebus Bulgaricis / For the antiquity of the fatherland and Bulgarian affairs*. (T. 1); *The treatise "The Antiquity of the Fatherland and the Deeds of the Bulgarians": Palaeography, Textology, Language*. (T. 2). Sofia, 2020 (620 + 170 p.). ISBN: 978-954-07-5053-8.

This work is accompanied by two previous articles, the first of which is "The Antiquity of the Fatherland and the Deeds of the Bulgarians" by Petar Bogdan Baksic - Structure, Contents, Main Historical Sources. - *Orbis linguarum (Language World)* 2, 2019, 74–85. In it, Tsvetan Vasilev presents the *codex unicus* of the first historical treatise of the Bulgarian Revival, discovered by Lilia Ilieva in 2017, and shares his initial observations on the structure and content of the text, as well as some of the main sources cited by Petar Bogdan. Already in this publication, the author manages to show the scale of the discovery and the significance of the historiographical tradition of the Bulgarian Catholics. In the second publication (Apostolic Letter on the Appointment of Iliya Marinov as Bishop of Sofia of July 29, 1624 - *Balkan Forum*, 3/2020, 224-235) Dr Vasilev compares an excerpt from the newly discovered text of Peter Bogdan on the appointment of the first Bulgarian, Iliya Marinov, for Bishop of Sofia in 1624, with the text of the apostolic letter for this appointment he had discovered in the Secret Archives of the Vatican (Secr. Brev. 955, f. 117–119r.), supplementing its contents with some historical data from the treatise. Thus, the researcher once again proves the value of his testimonies for Bulgarian history, but also his excellent preparation for successful archaeological research. The actual habilitation work is the first edition of the long-sought Bulgarian history of the Archbishop of Serdica Peter Bogdan, also known for the Latin calque of his name - Petrus Deodatus, accompanied by a monographic study on this work. The historical treatise on Bulgaria and the Bulgarians remained lost for three and a half centuries after its writing due to the injustice of the time ("iniuria temporum"), as its author himself says on a similar occasion. It provokes the search ambitions of the most famous representatives of historical and philological science, who study the history of the Bulgarian Catholic Church - Eusebius Fermendjin, Lubomir Miletich, Nikola Milev, Ivan Duychev, Bozhidar Dimitrov, Joanna Spisarevska, Marko Yachov, Borislav Tomtov, Ishtvan Tot, Krassimir Stanchev and many others. It was discovered only in 2017 - by Lilia Ilieva, who rediscovered for generations this first Bulgarian historical treatise from the New Age, preceding by almost a century the "Slavo-Bulgarian History" of Paisij. The fact that Prof. Ilieva entrusts the publication of the text she found to the classical philologist Tsvetan Vasilev is the first prerequisite for the excellently prepared edition of her find. In my opinion, no critical edition of a Latin text of such extremely high quality has been prepared in Bulgaria so far, in the strictest requirements for a true *editio critica*. This is a great scientific contribution to the work reviewed here.

The edition of the text of *De antiquitate paterni soli et de rebus Bulgaricis* by Peter Bogdan begins with an INTRODUCTION (pp. 7-24), briefly presenting Peter Bogdan, (a detailed account of his exceptional personality the reader finds in the second book) Franciscan monk and a missionary, Catholic Archbishop of Sofia, wrote the first Bulgarian history of modern times. Here Tsvetan Vassilev also placed the description of the manuscript № 689 / γ.Y.5.8, ff.

308r - 407v, a convolute from the G. Campori fund of the Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, carefully observing the manuscript cataloguing form - as far as the available data allow.

The introduction clarifies the principles of the text edition, as well as the principles of translation. This is one of the contributions of the publication - the principles of publishing a text preserved in a single transcript has been established. The researcher has found the golden mean in terms of original orthography and punctuation - he leaves unchanged some spelling features, thus managing to preserve the specifics of the printed editions used by Peter Bogdan and the published codex unicus. The adaptations, made for the convenience of modern readers, are described in detail so that everyone can get an adequate idea of the original text. In this perspective, the publisher has preserved the capitalization of the words in the original, the writing of the digraphs <ae> u <oe> with *e caudata*, and the inconsistency in the use of the norms of classical and medieval orthography. On the other hand, the accents on the short forms of *ab* and *ex* and on the last vowel in some dialects have been removed; the use of <v> and <u> is in line with the modern graphic standard, as well as to a large extent that of punctuation marks. In the segmentation of the text, the author's division of chapters has been preserved and the division of paragraphs and lines has been added - a requirement sine qua non for a modern critical edition. Abbreviations from the manuscript are presented in detail in the edition, except for abbreviations of *Christus* and derivatives. It should be emphasized that in general the principles of the text edition correspond to the best practices of modern textology. Tsvetan Vasilev realized the first critical edition of the Latin text of Peter Bogdan, providing a reliable research base for historical and philological research of this exceptional historiographical monument.

The following introduction, BIBLIOGRAPHY (pp. 25 - 41), describes the editions of the sources used in the original text (pp. 25 - 36), as well as the secondary literature used by the researcher in preparing the edition, translation and commentary on the history of Peter Bogdan. pp. 37 - 41).

Tsvetan Vasilev's translation shows not only exceptional precision in terms of the correct presentation of the Latin text but also a fictional sense that made the Bulgarian translation sound like a fluent, fascinatingly written narrative. He has found the measure between the archaic language and the possibilities for its perception by the modern reader. The ornate phrases of Baroque literature are conveyed in an adequate, understandable and clear form, without being deprived of their lavish expression. Another contribution is the accurate translation of the complex terminology relating to religious orders, the papal office, the title of Catholic prelates and church rites, part of which is introduced in the Bulgarian scientific literature.

The second book of the two-volume book, entitled THE TREATISE "THE ANTIQUITY OF THE FATHERLAND AND THE DEEDS OF THE BULGARIANS . PALEOGRAPHY, TEXTOLOGY, LANGUAGE (151 p.), is the first comprehensive philological study of its kind on the work of Peter Bogdan. Tsvetan Vasilev placed this work in a series of modern editions of sources on the history of Bulgarian Catholicism, which began with Eusebius Fermendjin in 1887. This work remains an authoritative source for the activities of Catholic missionaries along with a plethora of studies published in the twentieth century. Evaluating the previous editions, the author works with the clear awareness that the most valuable are the notes and memories that the first archbishop of the Bulgarian Catholics tells himself. Based on the treatise of Peter Bogdan and other documents, Vasilev compiled his biography, supplemented with many

hitherto unknown information and new interpretations, another contribution to the history of Bulgarian Catholic figures from the seventeenth century. The study also presents an analytical review of the work of Peter Bogdan, aimed at showing the development of his worldview and its culmination in the historical treatise *De antiquitate paterni soli et de rebus Bulgaricis*. The comparative analysis of relations from 1640-1667 outlines several thematic circles in his works: they relate to the Paulicians, the past of Sofia and the Council of Serdica and the history of Bulgaria and the Bulgarians. All of them are interpreted in more detail in the historical treatise, especially in the topic of Ohrid or the Council of Serdica (often called Sardic) and the passionate defence of the sometimes disputed fact that this ecumenical council was held on Bulgarian soil in ancient times - in Serdica, not in Sardis.

The seventy chapters of the historical treatise are presented by the author of the study as a text with an exquisite literary style, enriched with quotations from the works of various authors from antiquity to the seventeenth century. The exact identification of the quotations is one of the contribution achievements in every critical edition and here it is undoubtedly performed flawlessly. The astonishing diversity of Petar Bogdan's sources (over 100 works by over 70 authors) is seen in the inventory of the identified sources presented in the study - INDEX LOCORUM and the conclusions on its content, "fruit of scientific approach, hard work and long discipline" 78 - 102). With this index, Dr Vasilev proves the scientific value of his work, which uses the most authoritative works of Baroque historiography from the perspective of the history of Christianity in the Bulgarian lands until the Christianization of the Bulgarians. Here the emphasis is on the acceptance of instructions by Pope Nicholas I, and further on the history of the Catholic community and the Franciscan missions in Bulgaria and Wallachia until the establishment of the Archbishopric of Sofia.

In the CONCLUSION to this part (pp.100 - 102), the author summarizes his arguments for the exceptional value of Peter Bogdan's work as a historical work - an original scientific work in the modern sense of the word, but also "a synthesized summary of the archpastoral and life experience of the clergy, the intellectual and Latinist Peter Bogdan ". The high documentary value of the studied treatise, which contains transcripts of letters from the papal office, from clergy and laity, Catholic hierarchs, and residents of Chiprovtsi, is not left out.

The MANUSCRIPT, containing the treatise of Peter Bogdan, is the subject of the exposition in the last part of the book, which contains a palaeographic analysis clarifying its physical and palaeographic characteristics - size, paper, lining, watermarks (bird in profile and six-pointed star with cross and letter). <F> - both types were distributed in Italy in the 17th century. The author proves that the manuscript was written by a professional copyist who did not even know the Cyrillic alphabet - this can be seen, for example, from the recreated signature of the Wallachian voivode "John Radul" (pp. 106 - 107). Italian language, which is found in the original text.

A linguistic analysis of the text was carried out, the results of which give the researcher reason to define it as classical Latin, "nuanced by the language of Christian preaching and Christian terminology" (p. 112). He did not fail to mention the use of some Turkish words as indeclinable, such as *cadi*, *spahi* and others. At the level of orthography and syntax, deviations from the

classical norm have been noticed, which are more natural for medieval Latin texts. In general, Vasilev concluded that "the linguistic features of the work of Peter Bogdan testifies to a high level of mastery of classical Latin", with the corresponding deviations characteristic of the "post-classical language". He is inclined to accept that the errors belong to the scribe rather than to the author of the treatise, and "the terminological apparatus testifies to his high erudition, characteristic of a prelate of high rank in the Catholic hierarchy."

THE TERMINOLOGICAL DICTIONARY (pp. 126–134) was developed to aid in the understanding of Archbishop Peter Bogdan's history. Explanations of words from the Franciscan Order's and the Catholic Church's practice, such as liturgical conceptions, calendar holidays, documentation forms and their names, titles, and proper addresses, are vital for the Bulgarian reader, who is normally outside the Catholic tradition. Anyone who comes across the principles of Catholic religious activity will benefit from this terminological apparatus.

Following the bibliography (pp. 135–146), the edition includes 11 APPENDICES depicting Peter Bogdan's works and materials, the manuscript's watermarks, and portions of the text of *De antiquitate paterni soli et de rebus Bulgaricis* from manuscript No 689 / γ.Y.5.8, ff. 308r–407v of the Estense Library in Modena.

In conclusion, we can say that in front of us there is a work that presents at a high scientific level the first historical work of the Bulgarian Pre-Renaissance and the greatest Bulgarian contribution to European historiography. With the publication prepared by Dr. Tsvetan Vassilev, the work of the Bishop of Serdica, Peter Bogdan, will reach the addressees for whom it was conceived — the heirs of his flock in Bulgaria on the one hand, and the educated European public on the other.

Dr Vasilev's work undoubtedly meets the highest requirements for a habilitation thesis and presents its author as a graduate researcher with outstanding scientific qualifications in the field of Neo-Latin studies and Latin palaeography. The information under Art. 2b of the Academic Staff Development Act on 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology shows the fulfillment of the national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor". The scientific contributions of Assistant Professor Dr Vasilev, demonstrated in his publications and reports at scientific conferences (11 in the period 2015–2021), his participation in 4 research projects and his teaching activities, prove his candidacy for the academic position of "Associate Professor" as completely justified. Based on Dr Vasilev's achievements, I support his election and wholeheartedly recommend to the esteemed Academic Council that Tsvetan Vasilev be selected for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 2.1. "Philology" (Classical Languages). This will be an important step in his academic career, presupposing good prospects for the development of the teaching staff of the Department of Classical Philology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".