

# REVIEW

Of the scientific and academic work

Of

**Dr. Martin Ossikovski**

Presented for the participation

In a competition for the position of Associate Professor

In the professional field of

*3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies (Theory and History of Culture. The culture of research work and communication in the social sciences and the humanities)*

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boris D. Grozdanoff

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I have known Dr. Ossikovski since 2002, when we met at the Central European University and spent a couple of years in active academic exchange. My personal impressions of him, now about 20 years old, are that he has grown into a mature and original scholar, which, given his talent and systemic hard work in the academia, and particularly in the often hardly hospitable academic environment in Bulgaria is, not short of fascinating. In this sense, certainly I welcome his participation in the competition and I believe that, if selected, Dr. Ossikovski would be a highly valuable addition to any department in his relevant academic fields and even more so in Bulgarian departments.

The position of Associate professor requires a number of abilities and skills, which I will examine in the context of the currently announced position. First and foremost the candidate should have the *ability to conduct independent, original and valuable scientific research in the field*. This ability is typically to be cultivated through defending academic degrees, serving as a researcher in the role of visiting reasearcher, fellow or other, preferably at leading universities and academic institution in the field, and not bounded to a national academic frame, which sometimes acts as a frame for the intellectual thought.

Dr. Ossikovski has remarkably and consistently demonstrated such an ability along the course of his rich and full of achievements academic career. Far from being exhaustive, I will only highlight, first, his education, where Dr. Ossikovski graduated with a BA degree from the undoubtedly the leading Bulgarian university in the field of humanities, The University of Sofia. His BA was acquired in the field of Philosophy, which and especially at the time he studied, provided perhaps the best possible educational ground a student can gain in Bulgaria. The philosophy Dr. Ossikovski read at the BA level certainly provided him not only with in-dept knowledge and non-trivial academic competence in a number of related fields, like Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy but also introduced him to the broader field of cultural studies, which, remarkably, Dr. Ossikovski managed to approach with the instruments of Ancient Greek and Medieval Latin languages; having not acquired them at the National High School of Ancient Languages and Cultures is a fascinating achievement on its own and deserves admiration. His sincere academic interest in the interdisciplinary field that emerges at the crossroad of philosophy, cultural studies, literature and linguistics gradually found its focus in the historical epoch of the Middle

Ages and the Renaissance which Dr. Ossikovski demonstrated with the pursuit of an MA degree at of the European best programs in Medieval Studies at the Central European University where we met. There, he defended his MA thesis on "The Conciliar Doctrine of Marsilius of Padua: Political Resonances and Theological Connotations" with Magna Cum Laude which only serves to illustrate my impressions of Dr. Ossikovski capacity for high-level and original research in the field. Later, Dr. Ossikovski returned to his native Bulgaria, and defended his doctoral degree at the University of Sofia's *Department of History and Theory of Culture*, a part of the larger Philosophy Faculty, where he wrote a thesis on *The Church and The Council in the writings of Marcilio of Padua and William of Okham*. The acquisition of a doctoral degree naturally furnishes the required time for any scholar necessary to become capable of competently doing research in his field but also, and, more importantly, of his cultivated ability to contribute originally for the development of his field. Dr. Ossikovski has demonstrated such an ability many times and in many a good places in the academic life, both in research and in publication list, but also, by teaching at the university level, which is another requirement of the position of Associate professor for the present competition.

In the context of education it is important to highlight the *Chevening Scholarship* at the Oriel College of Oxford University, where Dr. Ossikovski, in the conditions of harsh competition, managed to win a year at arguably the leading university in the world in the field of humanities, philosophy and cultural studies. At Oxford Dr. Ossikovski conducted research on the late medieval history of the political thought with a focus on the first half of the 14th century, under the supervision of Prof. George Garnett, a distinguished Fellow from St. Hugh's College. This achievement

alone would be sufficient for many departments in the world to welcome Dr. Ossikovski as a colleague.

The second requirement of the position of an Associate Professor is the teaching ability. A lecturer at the university level, be it a BA, MA or a doctoral level, should not only be deeply versed in the history of the field but should also be capable of harnessing both the interest and the skills of the students. A devoted and competent lecturer might be the difference in the choice of a student towards the end of his or her studies to pursue an academic career or not. In both scenarios, as we all know, some lectures stand much taller than others and, having witnessed Dr. Ossikovski's lecturing skills on a number of occasions, mostly at the University of Sofia I have no doubt that he will become one of the best lecturers at the History and Theory of Culture at the University of Sofia.

The third requirement, less formal than the other two but nevertheless an important one, is the *capacity for administrative and social activity of the associate professor*. For that purpose the candidate should demonstrate untarnished personal and academic integrity, which would serve both the department and students well. This capacity is essential in a number of academic-administrative obligations such as doctoral supervision work and the participation in various academic committees. A person of anything less than flawless personal and academic integrity could endanger not only the results of the concrete academic occasions but also the reputation of the institution.

I am happy to attest that Dr. Ossikovski is a person of personal and academic honesty and also actively engaged in a systematic number of socially significant occasions where he defended, often at the expense of his own academic security, the principles of the academia in Bulgaria as well as

the freedom of thought of the Bulgarian university lecturers. It is therefore that I can suggest to the Competition Committee that if they choose to select Dr. Ossikovski as their colleague and fellow researcher they would also enhance the prospects for the active and principle academic life of the department in a very promising way.

Last but not least Dr. Ossikovski has an impressive list of academic publications to date, which only serve to illustrate his capacity for independent and original work in the broader field of cultural studies. But also,, and more importantly, they serve to attest that Dr. Ossikovski has already contributed to the development of his academic field of choice, which, having impressions of the recent dynamics in the Bulgarian academic expertise in the field of Humanities, would be, a rare and most welcome addition to any Bulgarian department. I will only list few of them, his books, in particular.

His first book, published in 2010 by the most reputable Bulgarian academic publisher, University of Sofia Press, St. Kliment of Ochrid, is titled “Shelters of the Faith. The Church and the Council in the writings of Marcilio of Padua and William of Okham”, written in Bulgarian, and is the end result of a multi-year research work in Bulgaria, Hungary and the United Kindgom.

His second book, a translation of John Milton with commentaries (163 pages, with 349 parallell commentary notes by Dr. Ossikovski) is titled “ Of Education, Areopagithics” and is published by List publishers in 2020, being edited by Prof. Kalin Yanakiev.

His last to date book is titled “The Priest and the Seal. Topoi of faith in the foreign news, 2011 - 2019”, 213 pages, written in Bulgarian and

published by the renown Bulgarian academic publisher Faber Publishing House.

Dr. Ossikovski has an upcoming participation in a collective academic monograph, titled “Media Literacy” as member of author’s collective with Tsankova, Angova, Nikolova, Valchanov, Valkov and Minev. The book is expected before the end of 2022 and is being published by the academic publishing house of the University of National and World Economy.

From the papers, published in academic journals, too many to discuss in separate here, I will only highlight few of them: Martin Ossikovski, „Some Medieval Readings of Aristotle’s Argument for the Collective Superiority of „the Many“, *Studia Neoaristotelica* 9, 2 (2012): 133-152 ; Martin Ossikovski, „[Review notice] Vasileios Syros, *Die Rezeption der aristotelischen politischen Philosophie bei der ersten Diktion des Defensor Pacis von Marsilius von Padua*“, *Mediaevalia et humanistica* 36 (2010): 182-185; Martin Ossikovski, „Guido Terreni, Marsilius of Padua, and William of Ockham on Institutional Infallibility“, *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 77, 2 (2010): 299-311 and Мартин Осиковски, прев. и бележки, „Уилям Джеймс. Волята да вярваш“, *Християнство и култура* 45 (2009): 99-116.

On the basis of my personal impressions of Dr. Ossikovski and his academic work, as well as on the basis of his academic achievements until now, in the form of academic research, academic publications, lecturing and seminar conducting on university level I believe that Dr. Ossikovski is a most promising candidate for the announced position of an Associate professor at the History and Theory of Culture department at the Faculty of Philosophy of University of Sofia. He will be a valuable addition to the academic team of the department and I find reasons to believe that from his

future work would benefit not only the students and the department but also the University of Sofia.

Formally, I accept that the candidacy of Dr. Ossikovski meets the required by the Bulgarian Law minimal academic standards, listed in the national academic registry of NACID. I accept the pretended academic contributions in the enclosed to the competition documents, in the form of academic monographs, journal papers and edited academic volume entries. I also accept the demonstrated in Dr. Ossikovski's Academic *Curriculum Vitae* capacity of conducting high-level and field evolving academic research. I accept Dr. Ossikovski's lecturing abilities as well.

I find that all of these meet both the letter and the spirit of the required by the Bulgarian Academic Law procedure of taking the academic position of an Associate Professor in the field of Humanities. I have no common publications with Dr. Ossikovski and I am not in a conflict of academic interest with the candidate.

On the basis of this I would like to recommend Dr. Ossikovski's candidacy to the attention of the Honorable committee as meeting and actually exceeding all the requirements of this competition, both formal and material. I propose to the Committee to select Dr. Ossikovski as an Associate Professor for the announced position and I wish him good luck in his future academic endeavours.

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Sofia 31.10.2022