

S T A T E M E N T

**by Assoc. Prof. Mihail Ivanov Gruev, Ph. D. - SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"/
State Agency "Archives", habilitated in Professional direction 2.2. - History
and Archeology (History of Bulgaria) for participation in a competition for the
academic position of "Professor" at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" by
professional direction 3.1. – Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences
(Theory and history of culture. History of Bulgarian culture 15th – 19th
centuries and cultural heritage (public policies, management and
socialization))**

1. Legality of the procedure

By order of the rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" No. RD 38-256/16.05.2023, I have been appointed as an internal member of a scientific jury for the holding of a competition for the occupation of the academic position of "professor" at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" by professional direction 3.1. – Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences (Theory and history of culture. History of Bulgarian culture 15th – 19th centuries and cultural heritage (public policies, management and socialization)). The competition was announced in the State Gazette, no. 35/18.04.2023 The only participant in it is Assoc. Prof. Georgi Alexandrov Valchev, Ph. D. - lecturer in the Department of History and Theory of Culture at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University. My review of the procedure for admission to participation in the competition and the formation of the scientific jury did not find any deviation from the provisions of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its Implementation, as well as from the Rules for the Terms and Conditions for acquisition of scientific degrees and occupation of academic positions at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". According to the documents provided, the candidate meets both the minimum national requirements laid down in the LDASRB and the additional requirements of the Sofia University, which is why I believe that the procedure is completely legal.

2. Research work and contributions of the candidate

Since the earlier researches of Assoc. Prof. Georgi Valchev, Ph. D., have already been subject to evaluation and scientific criticism in the course of his academic growth, only his publications after 2010, when he held the current academic position, will be analyzed and commented here. However, I feel obliged to point out that his monograph "Foreigners in the Bulgarian post-liberation culture", published by the Stara Zagora publishing house "Kota" in the distant 2001 and to this day remains the most serious contribution to the study of the place of the hundreds of Western (and most -now Czech) intellectuals and entrepreneurs who invested their efforts in building the new European image of Bulgaria. I should emphasize that this topic, considered by Valchev and more widely - as Bulgarian cultural receptions of the "European" at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, continues to occupy the author in a significant part of his work. Among his more important publications proposed for review, his works on the bandmaster issue in Bulgarian musical culture, the "Takela" affair, which arose around the theft of coins from the numismatic collection of the Plovdiv National Library, could be assigned to this thematic circle with some convention, the place of the Czechs in the cultural development of post-liberation Bulgaria and a number of others.

The second major thematic circle that can be distinguished in Valchev's work is around public policies in the field of national cultural heritage, its socialization and management. It should be noted that in this field the author has many years of practical experience and excellent theoretical training, which are successfully complemented in his research. Among them, I would point out his researches in the field of museology and museologicalization of cultural heritage as particularly contributing. One of the themes that Valchev takes up in these publications, and to which he will later return, looking at the Bulgarian Revival era, is that of the changing images of the past, deposited in the various institutions of memory and in particular in museums and conjunctural uses of these images. In this regard, some of his publications contain quite a bit of criticism of the current state of Bulgarian museums and even irony towards some clumsy attempts to look for cheap sensations in them.

Closely related to this thematic circle of Valchev's research are his publications in the field of local and regional history. As can be seen from them, he remains attached to the history and cultural heritage of his native Stara Zagora region and

does everything in his power to popularize and adequately present it in a national context. Such is the nature of his research on the Stara Zagora Tourist association "Sarnena Gora", on the village of Sladak Kladenets, the editing of the memories of h. G. Slavov, etc.

Undoubtedly, a central place in Georgi Valchev's work is occupied by his works on the symbolic capital of the Bulgarian revival. In his research, the author goes beyond the factual reconstruction of the events and personalities of this era and tries to assess their significance through the dynamics in the evaluations of them in more recent times, as well as through their own reflexivity. He made a significant contribution in this direction with his monographic study on Zahari Stoyanov in 2010, which, as already stated, will not be subject to review. The new monographic work of Georgi Valchev submitted for participation in the competition, entitled: "History and its uses. "Political and Cultural Uses of the Past from the Bulgarian Revival to the End of the First World War" represents a new upgrade of this theme, by tracing the rise and fall of Revival and medieval themes in the political discourse of the post-liberation era and the projections of all this in science, literature, visual arts and architecture. The study begins with biographical essays on three personalities emblematic of the Revival era in different ways - Paisii Hilendarski, Georgi Rakovski and Nikolay Pavlovich. Valchev considers their biographies as a kind of archetypal models in which the first Bulgarian textual and visual narratives about the past are located, and from which its current political uses begin. The author also used this approach in the second part of his research, in which he analyzes the very process of turning the Revival into "history" and building its iconography and martyrology. Again, through the biographical trajectories of three iconic figures, constituting in themselves a bridge between the two eras - Zahari Stoyanov, Ivan Vazov and Stoyan Zaimov, and through their work, he traces the inner logic of the entire process. The third chapter of Valchev's research is dedicated to the gradual decline of the Bulgarian revival era as a symbol and example at the beginning of the 20th century and the turning of public interest and artistic creativity to the time of the Middle Ages. As he persuasively demonstrates, this reversal was actively encouraged by the palace, whose principal occupant increasingly began to experience himself as the successor of the Byzantine Basileuses. It can be summarized that Valchev's research on the uses of history represents a successful attempt at interdisciplinary research, located at the

crossroads between classical source work, discursive cultural analysis and the history of artistic life in Bulgaria at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

3. Teaching activity

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Valchev is already an established lecturer with more than twenty years of teaching work at Sofia University. As can be seen from the Academic Reference attached to the documents, since 2003 he has been teaching Bachelor and Master courses on History of Bulgarian Culture/Revival Period, Cultural Calendar and Cultural Events, Public Policies for the Protection and Socialization of Cultural Heritage, The Symbolic Capital of the Bulgarian Revival, Bulgarian culture XV - XIX century, Culture and regional identity and History of cultural institutions in Bulgaria. He is the scientific supervisor of dozens of graduate students and four successfully defended doctoral students. To what has been said so far should be added his great administrative experience as head of the Department of Theory and History of Culture, deputy dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and deputy rector of Sofia University. I mention this because I am deeply convinced that in practical-applied disciplines and specialties, combining theoretical training with administrative experience is one of the recipes for a successful teaching career.

4. Conclusion

I am convinced that everything said above gives me sufficient grounds to vote "for" with conviction in the election of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Alexandrov Valchev to the academic position of "Professor".

Member of the Scientific Jury:

/ Assoc. Prof. Mihail Gruev, Ph. D./