

Review of a Candidate's Application for the Academic Position "Associate Professor" at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

by

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on behalf of Chief Ass. Tsvetan Stefanov, Vasilev, PhD

Professional field: 2.1 Classical Philology

advertised in DV,21/15.03.2022.

1. Procedure Information:

The Associate Professorship competition was announced for the needs of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Department of Classical Philology. The only applicant for the position is Chief Ass. Prof. Tsvetan Stefanov Vasilev. The documents submitted by him meet the requirements of the ZRASRB (Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria) and in essence provide the possibility to evaluate his scientific achievements and research and teaching activities. The scientific measurement indicators of the candidate fully correspond to the minimal national legal requirements in all four groups of indicators.

2. Information for the applicant:

Educational and Professional Record:

Tsvetan Vasilev graduated from the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with a Master's Degree in History in 2006 (specialty: Medieval Latin Studies). In 2014 he was appointed as ordinary assistant at the Department of Classical Philology, and in 2016 he defended his dissertation on "Linguistic features of Greek inscriptions in the frescoes of churches with bilingual inscriptions from the 17th century in Bulgaria."

In the same year he won a competition for chief assistant at the Department of Classical Philology. In 2021, Tsvetan Vasilev was appointed Chief Assistant at the Cyril and Methodius Research Center - BAS.

He teaches Latin and ancient Greek courses for students of the Bachelor's degree at the FCMF and Latin language courses for students of the Master's degree at the Faculty of History. He is fluent not only in the classical languages (Latin, Ancient Greek, and Old Bulgarian), but also in English, German and Russian. His research interests are in the field of medieval Latin and neo-Latin studies, medieval Latin paleography, medieval and post-Byzantine Greek epigraphy.

Tsvetan Vasilev has taken an active part in six projects. The first of them, between 2014-2017, is a project of the Institute for the Study of Arts at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and is dedicated to the paths of Balkan painters and post-Byzantine artistic heritage in Bulgaria. The outcome of his participation in this project is the monograph "The Greek language in the churches with mixed inscriptions from the 17th century in Bulgaria.", University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, 2017. Second in time is the project "Gutenberg Revolution and the Bulgarians" (Contract H DN 10/9), SWU "Neofit Rilski", 2016 - 2020.

Other two projects he is leading were dedicated to deciphering, translation from Latin into Bulgarian and the text-critical edition of the two-volume work of Peter Bogdan Bakshich "On the antiquity of the fatherland and Bulgarian affairs", published in 2020.

Since 2021, the candidate has started a new project "Selection, revision and editing of post-Byzantine church frescoes from the 17th century in order to encode them for electronic epigraphic corpus", № 80-11-363 / 06.08.2021. Last, but not least, Tsvetan Vasilev also participated in the project "Student Internships" from 2016.

Description of the applicant's scientific work, teaching, and project activity:

The candidate has submitted two lists of publications. One contains all his publications, including three monographs, one chapter of a collective monograph, eight articles and studies in scientific journals and five articles and studies in collections. Five of them are in English.

Tsvetan Vasilev participates in the competition with seven of his publications, of which two monographs and 5 articles and studies published in scientific journals (4) and collections (1). Two of the articles are in English. It is this part of the publications that I will focus on, in accordance with the legal requirements.

The first of the candidate's monographs is "The Greek language in the churches with mixed inscriptions from the 17th century in Bulgaria". University Publishing House "St. Kliment

Ohridski", Sofia, 2017. Here the candidate describes, translates, and comments on 225 Greek inscriptions (121 scrolls) from 18 churches with bilingual inscriptions from the 17th century. Complete photographic documentation is attached to the epigraphic material. The candidate has made a detailed classification of the inscriptions according to their linguistic features, based on a broad theoretical basis in the field of early modern Greek linguistics. The mechanisms for writing Greek inscriptions in a predominantly non-Greek language environment and the different strategies for compiling different types of inscriptions have been reconstructed. In this regard, the errors in the composition of the inscriptions, the phenomenon of bi-alphabetism, referring to the mixing of Greek and Cyrillic letters in certain inscriptions are described in detail. Last, but not least, Tsvetan Vasilev defined the function of the Greek texts in the studied inscriptions as part of the general visual impact of the mural and in the context of the general sacred message of the text in its relationship with the respective image.

The investigation of the post-Byzantine Greek inscriptions in Bulgaria is in fact a promising direction in the scientific interests of Tsvetan Vasilev, and the presented study is pioneering in several areas in the study of this epigraphic material. In this regard, as I have already noted, Tsvetan Vasilev has joined a very interesting project for the digitalization of this material.

The second monograph, which presents the candidate, is the second volume of a study dedicated to the translation and publication of the work of Peter Bogdan Bakshich *De antiquitate paterni soli et de rebus Bulgaricis*. However, since the two volumes cannot be completely separated, here we will focus on the overall study.

It is dedicated to the newly discovered manuscript of the work of Archbishop Peter Bogdan Bakshich *De antiquitate paterni soli et de rebus Bulgaricis*. Here the candidate again shows his excellent skills as a philologist and historian, with increased interests in the field of medieval studies. Indeed, the fact that this difficult task was entrusted to him is a happy coincidence, as Tsvetan Vasilev has the energy of youth and the skills of an already established researcher, which helped him to cope, in my opinion, with a real challenge.

The study consists of two volumes, the first of which is a translation, but also with the original Latin text of the work and extensive commentary below the line. Here Tsvetan Vasilev managed to cope perfectly with the pitfalls of late Renaissance Latin, used in the Papal Institution and its many branches, as well as the insidious historical realities of the 17th century, when the current situation is mixed with the erudite, derived from classical sources, knowledge, which, however, is sometimes misleading, both for the author of the text and for his researcher and publisher.

We must note the professional layout of the translation, with clearly reflected principles of translation and publication of the text, notes on spelling and punctuation, separation of paragraphs and many other infinitely important details that allow a late medieval or early modern manuscript to be convincingly presented to modern audiences. Finally, we have a summarized and updated version of the biography of Peter Bogdan, a wonderful bibliography and precise indexes of names, geographical realities, and terms.

The second volume is a large-scale study of various aspects of the text, the epoch, the author. An important place is occupied by the paleographic study of the manuscript, which is also done according to all the rules of science. A paleographic analysis of the manuscript was made, because of which it was proved that the manuscript was a transcript and not an original. A textual analysis was performed, because of which the many sources used by the author were established. The classification of the sources by genres is made-historical, church-historical, church-geographical, hagiographic, dogmatic, "common places", cartographic sources, travelogues, documents, correspondence. A complete inventory of the sources in chronological order is presented, including over 100 works by over 70 authors. A linguistic analysis of the text was carried out, because of which several peculiarities of the author's style were established, such as an attempt to observe the norms of classical Latin and the influences of the language of the sources used. The two volumes of the research are organically connected and show the exceptional maturity and skills of Dr. Tsvetan Vasilev, who is beginning to establish himself as one of the experts in this field in the Medieval Studies in Bulgaria. The work is the first comprehensive philological study and presentation of the manuscript of the treatise of Peter Bogdan.

The presented studies and articles are related to both monographs. I would like to point out the article "Apostolic Letter on the Appointment of Iliya Marinov as Bishop of Sofia on July 29, 1624", which presents for the first time in translation and original document, quoted in part in the historical treatise of Peter Bogdan "On the antiquity of the fatherland and on Bulgarian affairs."

Another publication (in print) has a similar nature, which deals with the issue of a newly discovered papal certificate on the establishment of the Custody of Bulgaria and Wallachia in 1624. Again, based on the text of Peter Bogdan, an unknown document is identified. This suggests that this full edition of the text of Peter Bogdan's work will provide material for new discoveries, which strengthens its importance for science.

The other three publications with which Tsvetan Vasilev applies for the academic position of "Associate Professor" are thematically related to the first monograph. Two of them are in English

- the first, dedicated to a Byzantine epigram from the narthex of the Kremikovtsi Monastery (1493) and an article on the problem of bilingualism in post-Byzantine inscriptions in Balkan art.

The third article, co-authored with Elka Bakalova, is dedicated to the images of St. Theodore the Studite in Bulgaria and their Balkan context. All of them are related to certain aspects of the functioning of Greek inscriptions in the field of monumental Christian painting from the period of Ottoman rule in our lands.

The attached information meets the minimum national criteria for all four groups of indicators and demonstrate full coverage of these criteria.

I can boldly summarize that Dr. Tsvetan Vasilev, although still belonging to the young generation of researchers, has already shown significant skills and maturity in his publications, which makes him a worthy candidate for the proposed academic position of "Associate Professor".

3. Conclusion:

The teaching, research and project activity of Chief Assistant Professor Tsvetan Stefanov Vasilev fully meets the standards for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" according to the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. Based on this circumstance, I have the pleasure of proposing to the Honorable Committee to award the academic position of Associate Professor, Prof. Field: 2.1. Classical Philology to Chief Ass. Prof. Tsvetan Stefanov Vasilev, PhD, and wish the candidate further professional success.

12.06. 2022
Sofia

Signature:
/Prof. Alexandar Nikolov, PhD/

