

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rossitza Tasheva,
member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of
“Associate Professor” in the Faculty of History of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", in
professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (Modern History - History of Great
Britain in the 19th century), announced in State Gazette, issue 24 of 17.03.2023

with a single candidate in the competition
Chief Assistant Professor Doctor Lubomir Tsvetanov Krastev,
lecturer in Modern History at the Faculty of History of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Chief Assistant Professor Doctor Lubomir Krastev has presented precisely prepared documentation for his research and teaching work, from which it is clear that his candidacy meets all the conditions for participation in the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor”. The materials presented by the candidate convincingly prove that he not only fulfills the minimum national requirements specified in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (Articles 2b, 24 and 26) and in the Regulations for its application, but also significantly exceeds the minimum of 400 points in the different groups of indicators regarding the number, nature and citations of his scientific publications. The candidate has achieved a score of 565 points. The cited official reference for the seminar classes and lecture courses that Lubomir Krastev leads reveals that he has 875 teaching hours of classroom work (2021/2022 academic year), which is much more than the norm for the academic position "Associate Professor".

Academic growth and career development of the candidate

I have known Dr. Lubomir Krastev since his student years, I was his supervisor during his doctoral studies, and my immediate impressions of his overall research and teaching work are very positive.

Lubomir Krastev received his higher education at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2011, he graduated as a Bachelor of History with a specialization in Modern History and two years later as a Master of History in the master's program "Crises, Conflicts and Diplomacy in World Politics, XVI-XX Centuries". In 2017, Lubomir Krastev successfully defended his dissertation on "Napoleon Bonaparte in British public opinion, 1796-1815", for which he was awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". For almost the entire time of his doctoral studies, he worked as a part-time Assistant Professor at the Department of Modern and Contemporary History at the Faculty of History of SU and at the same time as an expert in digitization of books for the needs of the Faculty of History. Despite these additional activities, he ranks among the few doctoral students who managed to complete the work on their dissertations ahead of schedule.

In October 2017, Dr. Lubomir Krastev was appointed to the position of Chief Assistant Professor in the Department of Modern and Contemporary History at the Faculty of History of SU. His lecture courses are devoted to a variety of issues - history of Modern Times, various aspects of the development of international relations in the XVI-XIX centuries, history of the Jewish people, problems of diplomacy and security in the Middle East, history of the British Empire in the XIX century and of British foreign policy doctrines. He was a visiting lecturer at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, he was also a guest lecturer at the University of Cologne. Lubomir Krastev works very well with his students, he is a respected and sought-after teacher. This is evidenced by the fact that for a period of only 3 years (2019-2022) he was the supervisor of 12 graduate students in the master's degree.

Along with his intensive teaching work, Lubomir Krastev acts as a leader and active participant in the implementation of a number of scientific projects at the Faculty of History of Sofia University - he organizes and participates in scientific conferences, compiles and edits collections of reports, he is a co-organizer of the national exhibition, dedicated to the Faculty of History (May 20-25, 2022), he is member of various committees in the faculty. He has also made various media appearances for promoting his knowledge and academic achievements.

Research achievements and scientific contributions of Dr. Lubomir Krastev

Lubomir Krastev participates in the competition for Associate Professor with 14 scientific works, published after the defense of his dissertation, which are distributed in the following categories:

- Habilitation work – one published monograph;
- Published book based on defended dissertation work;
- Four articles published in a scientific review, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information
- One study and seven reports and articles published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and in edited collective volumes - collections

The presented publications reveal Dr. Lubomir Krastev as an active author, able to choose interesting topics, usually neglected or insufficiently explained in historiography, to pay attention to little-known circumstances, to offer his own interpretation of the studied problems.

A good example of Dr. Krastev's individual view of historical events is offered by his habilitation thesis - the monograph "The Palmerston War. Britain, the Crimean War and the Balance of Power". University publishing house "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2022 (280 p.). The author has set himself the goal of interpreting the rich and complex issues of the Crimean War by putting in the center of his attention the role played in the conflict by the British politician Lord Palmerston. This approach in the studies about the Crimean War, is unconventional, original, and from this point of view it can be argued that the very choice of the topic is a prerequisite for a scientific contribution.

The research stands on a very broad base of documentary sources and scientific literature. Particularly valuable and impressive are the numerous archival materials that Lubomir Krastev has searched for in British archives and libraries. It is also evident that he has studied in detail and extensively used in his work the published stenographic diaries of the British Parliament, the British periodical press, as well as various testimonies of direct participants in the events.

The exposition on the topic has a logical structure, it is organized into eight chapters proportionate in volume, to which the author has given intriguing titles that arouse the interest of the reader. The inclusion of illustrative material from the British archives adds further value to the printed edition.

Lubomir Krastev defends with solid arguments his thesis that Palmerston was a leading figure in the events surrounding the Crimean War and the overall development of the Eastern Question. He presents Palmerston's doctrine, paying attention to his concept of European security and the preservation of the balance of power in Europe, examines in detail his political activity, emphasizing his efforts to build alliances in order to limit Russian expansion, reveals the ability of Palmerston to mobilize Britain's national resources for victory. This part of the study in which the author, on the basis of numerous documentary sources, paints a picture of public sentiments in Great Britain in the middle of the 19th century, highlighting the strong influence they had on politicians, is also very interesting and of undoubted contribution. Lubomir Krastev also supplements the traditional war narrative with his original research into the modern weaponry used, the devastating nature of epidemics during the conflict, the everyday lives of ordinary people and the price they were forced to pay. The monograph is presented in a very good academic style, contains a large number of original contributions and has a high educational value for Bulgarian readers.

The second monograph with which Dr. Lubomir Krastev participates in the competition for Associate Professorship is on the topic "Napoleon Bonaparte in British public opinion, 1796-1815" University publishing house "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2023 (300 p.). It is developed on the basis of the dissertation with the same title defended by him in 2017. In this work, Lubomir Krastev analytically and precisely traces the development of two opposing trends in British society: one, forming a "demonized" image of the French general (later emperor), and the other, expressing positive feelings towards him. The book gives Bulgarian readers an opportunity to get an idea of Great Britain with its political conflicts and social problems in a dramatic period of its history, when the threat of French aggression hung over it. For the writing of his work, the author has studied a very rich and diverse documentary material, which has given him the opportunity to make detailed

and comprehensive analyses, to formulate conclusions of a clearly pronounced contribution character.

Among Lubomir Krastev's other studies, those that he devoted to the great topic of epidemics in Modern history and people's efforts to cope with them stand out. In Bulgarian and even in world historiography, this issue remains largely unexplored. In order to draw attention to it, Lubomir Krastev initiated the organization of a scientific conference held in March 2022 at the Faculty of History of Sofia University. Dr. Krastev's first publication on the topic of epidemics was the study "The Smallpox Epidemic and the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-1871", in which he proved that the inability of the French to stop the spread of the disease was a very important factor in their defeat in the war. He subsequently published his research on cholera during the Crimean War, 1853-1856, which is also reflected in his habilitation thesis, as well as the articles "Epidemics in Modern Times and their Lessons" and "Epidemics as Everyday Life in Early Modern Europe".

His article "Crime or Enlightenment? On the works of the Marquis de Sade" is also significant and original. Here Lubomir Krastev offers his own interpretation of the works of the famous French writer, disputes some stereotypes about them, emphasizes their revolutionary nature. Another interesting publication of his, on a topic outside the framework of Modern times, is the article, in which L. Krastev discusses the attempts of some radical Zionists to solve the Jewish question through cooperation with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

I have not found any elements of plagiarism in Dr. Lubomir Krastev's scientific work. His research is original, the result of in-depth work with numerous documentary materials of different nature, it also shows his completely correct attitude towards the achievements of other researchers. Dr. Krastev's publications have already gained popularity, which is evident from their citation in the specialized literature. He has achieved a score of 135 citation points, significantly exceeding the required minimum of 50 points. A well-deserved recognition of Dr. Lubomir Krastev's scientific achievements, especially of his research on British history, is his election in 2020 as Early Career Member of the Royal Historical Society (RHS) of Great Britain.

Conclusion

The scientific publications of Dr. Lubomir Krastev presented in the competition, the data on his teaching work, organizational skills and public appearances, as well as my personal impressions of his exceptional work ability and complete dedication to the scientific tasks he undertakes, convince me in an indisputable way, that he meets all the necessary requirements and fully deserves to occupy the academic position of "Associate Professor". My assessment of his candidacy is entirely positive. I will vote "YES" for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the Faculty of History of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", in professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (Modern History - History of Great Britain in the 19th century) by Dr. Lubomir Tsvetanov Krastev.

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