**EXPERT OPINION**

from Prof. Dr. Alexandar Nikolov Nikolov

SU "St. Kliment Ohridski",

PN 2.2 History and Archeology (Medieval History)

On the academic achievements for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Professional Field 2.2 History and Archaeology, academic specialty Medieval History – The Western Model of Governance in the Aegean- Franks and Venetians, 13th-15th Centuries, announced in SG No. 65/28.07.2023 by the University of Sofia “St.Kliment Ohridski”, for the needs of the Department “Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History", Faculty of History with a single candidate, Chief Asst. Professor Ph.D. Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov.

**Assessment of compliance with the minimal national requirements and the requirements of the Regulations of the Activity of the University of Sofia:**

The verification of the data submitted by the applicant shows that the minimal national requirements of The Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, and the requirements of the Regulations of the Activity of the University of Sofia have been met and the procedure is completely legitimate. The candidate meets the conditions for participation in the procedure for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor", as the indicators in all six groups fully cover the necessary condition.

**Research activity and results:**

The only candidate Chief Assistant Prof. Dr. Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov graduated with a degree in "History" in 2002 at the "St. Kliment Ohridski" University of Sofia with a master's degree. He specializes in the Department of History of Byzantium and the Balkan Peoples. He also received a teaching qualification as a "History teacher". In 2007, he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on the topic "Angevin dominions in the Balkans", at the Faculty of History of the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski". (Department of History of Byzantium and the Balkan Peoples).

In 2006, he started working as a teacher of "History and Civilizations" at the IX French Language High School "Alphonse de Lamartine", Sofia. In 2010, he won the competition for chief assistant in medieval general history at the Department of Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History, IF, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", where he still works today. He leads a number of general and specialized courses in the field of medieval general history in the undergraduate programs of IF, as well as in the master's program "Antiquity and the Middle Ages" and the MP "Pedagogy of Geography and History Education".

He specialized in the University of Ioannina, Greece, and participated in a number of teaching mobilities under the Erasmus program and in a number of scientific and educational training projects for work with teachers. The candidate has an excellent command of French (including Old French), English and Russian. He has a solid knowledge of Latin and ancient Greek. He is a member of the Association of Byzantinologists and Medievalists in Bulgaria and the "Mediaevalia" Association.

**Description of scientific works:**

The candidate, Nikola Dyulgerov, has submitted an impressive total list of publications, which includes three monographs, 13 studies and articles (one of them in French), a chapter of a collective monograph. He also participated in the writing of three textbooks and 11 teaching aids for the secondary school. Two popular scientific publications are also presented.

For the competition, the candidate has submitted a separate list of seven publications, which includes his three monographs, from 2021, 2022 and 2023, one study and three articles published in renowned publications and collections.

The main work presented here is the monograph "The Western Model of Governance in the Aegean - Franks and Venetians (XIII - XV centuries)". Sofia: UI "St. Kliment Ohridski" 2023, ISBN (hardcover): 978-954-07-5802-2 ISBN (PDF): 978-954-07-5803-9. In it, the author presents in a comparative plan the features of the two models imposed in the Latin possessions of the Balkans after the Fourth Crusade and their evolution in the period under review. In the dominions of the "Franks" relations were initially established that were largely influenced by the feudal model existing in Western Europe, and the local Greek population was left largely outside the administration of the territories and treated as a subjugated population subjected to economic and religious oppression.

Subsequently, the model changed, the local Greek leaders "archonts" were partially allowed to rule, and in Achaea even a fairly high degree of interaction between the two communities was reached. In the Venetian possessions, the Republic applied more flexible forms of government, typical of its colonial possessions in general. She was also forced, in view of the growing threats in the 14th and 15th centuries, to make significant concessions to the local population and repeal a number of restrictive laws.

Ultimately, in both cases, the "Frankish" and Venetian authorities displayed considerable ingenuity in seeking to maintain their power in an increasingly unfavorable foreign and domestic political environment, especially after 1261, the restoration of Byzantium and the increasing pressure of the Ottoman Turks in the 14th and 15th centuries.

The second presented monograph, published in 2022, is devoted to the military campaigns of Charlemagne. In it, Nikola Dyulgerov has summarized his experience as a teacher of medieval general history, where the topic of the Carolingian Empire and its emergence is one of the central topics. The military campaigns of Charlemagne, which resulted in the formation of the first medieval empire in Western and Central Europe, which is based on the idea of ​​"renovatio" of the Roman Empire, are examined consistently and in detail. Much attention, and in fact the contributing part, is related to the tactics and strategy of military campaigns and campaigns, and also to the statesmanship and general talent of the Frankish ruler himself.

The author also pays special attention to some lesser-known campaigns such as the one against the Bretons and the war with the Avars, which is also relevant to Bulgarian medieval history. Nikola Dulgerov confirms the thesis that the main blow against the Avar Khaganate was delivered precisely by the Franks, and the Bulgarian ruler Krum took advantage of this pogrom to permanently take control of the eastern part of the former Avaria, turning Bulgaria into a neighbor of the Frankish Empire.

The third monograph submitted for the competition is dedicated to the dominions of the Anjou dynasty in the Balkans and is based on the candidate's doctoral dissertation. The features of the Angevin rule in the Albanian kingdom, Epirus and the Morea are examined sequentially and in a comparative plan, taking into account the individual local features, the duration and stability of the Angevin power in the considered territories and the specific relations with the local population. A valuable contribution is the elucidation of the role of Clarence as the capital of the Morea Principate, among many other valuable observations and summaries on the subject.

In the four publications presented, separate topics from the history of the Latin and Venetian presence in the Balkans are examined. The first of them is dedicated to the actions of the Thessaloniki king Boniface de Montferrat after the establishment of the Latin Empire in the Balkan area. The second article is dedicated to the status of the Principality of Morea in the 13th century. The remaining two articles clarify issues related to Venice's presence in the Balkans - especially on the island of Crete and Venice's relations with the Valona Principality in present-day Albania.

In general, Nikola Dyulgerov reveals himself as a fully formed and precise researcher of issues, both of the general medieval history, and especially of topics related to the Western European penetration and presence in the Balkans, in the so-called. "Byzantine" range. The citability of his research and the indisputable contributions, faithfully reflected in the documents attached to the competition, testify to an exceptional focus and purposefulness of his scientific research in topics that were also touched upon by other authors, but often times in the context of other, larger topics or in insufficient depth.

**Conclusion:**

From everything stated so far, we can summarize that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov, the only candidate, fully meets the criteria and requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor", in accordance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the Regulations of the Activity of the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski". His scientific production, teaching and project activities testify to high professionalism and significant scientific achievements in the field of medieval archaeology. Therefore, I strongly support and vote positively with "Yes" for the candidacy of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Nikola Romanov Dyulgerov for taking the academic position of "Associate Professor".

Date: 15th of November, 2023 Signature