

STATEMENT

By Dr. Ivan Dimitrov Valchev, Associate Professor in Classical Archaeology, member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by order of the Rector of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" No. ПД 38-565/ 03. 10. 2023, concerning the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (Archaeology – Medieval Archaeology).

The competition for the academic position of "associate professor" has been announced for the needs of the Department of Archeology of the Faculty of History of the Sofia University. The announcement was published in the State Gazette no. 65 of 28. 07. 2023. Documents for participation in the competition were submitted by one candidate – assistant professor Dr. Chavdar Yanakiev Kirilov, full-time lecturer in the Department of Archaeology. The document acceptance committee appointed by Mr. Rector determines that the candidate meets the requirements of ZRASB and the Regulations of the University and he is admitted to participate in the competition. The attached reference (Appendix 12) shows that assist. prof. Dr. Chavdar Kirilov fulfills the minimal national requirements laid down in art. 2b of ZRASB.

Chavdar Kirilov obtained a master's degree in Archeology at the Faculty of History of Sofia University (1998), after which, in 2006, he defended at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, a doctorate on the topic *„Проучвания върху ранносредновековните корени на европейската урбанизация: археологически структури от Средна Европа, тяхното социално и икономическо значение и сравнение със земите на Източните Балкани“*, subsequently published as a monograph under the title *"Die Stadt des Frühmittelalters in Ost und West. Archäologische Befunde Mitteleuropas im Vergleich zur östlichen Balkanhalbinsel"* (Bonn, 2006). In the period 2006-2008, Dr. Kirilov was an archaeologist at the Faculty of Chemistry of the Sofia University, then until 2010 he was the chief specialist in archaeology at the same faculty. In 2010, he joined the Department of Archeology as an assistant, and from 2012 until now he is an assistant professor in the said department.

Dr. Chavdar Kirilov is the holder of the lecture courses on "Archaeology of Late Antiquity" and "Archaeology of the Great Migration of Nations", he participates in the teaching of "Medieval Bulgarian Archaeology" – in the bachelor's program in archaeology. In addition, he conducts the seminars "Weapons and tools" and "Monasticism and monasteries". In the master's program, he is

the holder of the lecture courses "City and 'non-city' in early medieval Europe", "Byzantine city" and "Dendrochronology".

Under the guidance of Dr. Kirilov 9 students defend their masters' theses, dedicated to various problems of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages in the Bulgarian lands. Assist. prof. Kirilov, together with assist. prof. Dr. Romyana Koleva, is the head of the summer field practice in Medieval Archeology.

Ch. Kirilov is a participant in a number of scientific projects related to both the conduct of archaeological excavations and the application of non-destructive methods in archeology and geographic information systems in spatial analyses. He is a member of the European Association of Archaeologists and the editorial boards of the scientific journals *Studien zur Archäologie Europas* and *Bulgarian e-Journal of Archeology* (published by the Association of Bulgarian Archaeologists).

The proposed by Dr. Chavdar Kirilov habilitation work is entitled „*Непознатите познати. Стъклените гривни в България от късножелязната до османската епоха*“ (*The Unknown known. Glass bracelets in Bulgaria from the Late Iron Age to the Ottoman Era*). Sofia, 2023. The monograph is dedicated to a group of artifacts, which, although not insignificant in number, have not yet been the subject of a complete in-depth study. Glass bracelets, as is evident from the text of the book, appeared in the lands of today's Bulgaria in the 3rd century BC and are found until the end of the 19th century, but in some clearly defined chronological segments, and not in the entire period.

The main text of the study is 158 pages long and includes a preface, seven chapters and a conclusion. In the first three chapters, the state of research, the technology of making the glass bracelets and the approaches to systematization of the artifacts are discussed respectively. A critical review of the historiography shows that despite the frequent mention of glass bracelets in publications, in the majority of cases they are only noted in passing, and well-studied and published complexes are few in number. It is these problems that impose the need for a new look and attempt to systematize and interpret the material from the point of view of modern archaeological requirements. This is done in the following chapters of the monograph, dedicated respectively to La Tene, Roman, Middle Byzantine and Ottoman glass bracelets.

The questions posed and commented on by Chavdar Kirilov are not limited to the manufacturing technology, distribution and dating of the glass bracelets. Attention was paid to the

social status, gender, age, ethnic, religious and individual identity of the wearers of the bracelets. The level of studies and publications do not always allow for clear and definitive answers, and this has always been reported by Dr. Kirilov.

An essential part of the study is the Register of archaeological sites with glass bracelets in Bulgaria (pp. 159–359), which includes 372 examples. It is here that questions important to the chronology of glass bracelets are commented in detail and the author's reasons for accepting or not accepting the dates and interpretations proposed in the publications are indicated. Getting acquainted with the main part of the monograph, at times I had the impression that Ch. Kirilov's theses were insufficiently reasoned, but this was done in the Register and thus the text is as clean as possible of details and at the same time extremely readable and easy to understand. However, I would point out here the lack of real connection of the text with the register of archaeological sites and the absence of references to the pages where certain problems are discussed in more detail.

Dr. Kirilov's Habilitation not only represents a new look at glass bracelets, but also provides guidance for the study of quite a few other artifacts, often falling into the columns of "small finds" or even "mass material", as a result of which they are not given due attention. The huge amount of material and the need for a careful look at the publications and complexes made it necessary to develop the monograph almost entirely on published information, which, as the author himself notes, led to the fact that the questions posed were more than the answers given. Indeed, working with the thousands of glass bracelets would take, as Dr. Kirilov points out, one or two decades, but a detailed acquaintance with a selected part of the artifacts would probably contribute to refining some of the conclusions and conclusions.

In addition to the habilitation monograph, Chavdar Kirilov participated in the competition with another monograph (Appendix 2) and 8 articles and studies (Appendices 3–10). Most of them deal with various problems of settlement life in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The monograph *"Die Stadt des Frühmittelalters in Ost und West. Archäologische Befunde Mitteleuropas im Vergleich zur östlichen Balkanhalbinsel"* (Bonn, 2006) (Appendix 2) is a publication of his doctoral dissertation. It raises important questions about the "fate" of the Roman and late antique city in the early Middle Ages and illuminates the different paths of development in the eastern and central parts of Europe. In the study dedicated to the reduction of the fortified area of the late antique cities (appendix 3), the author prefers to speak not about the decline of the ancient city, but on the contrary, about its vitality in changed political, economic and religious

conditions. This observation is in tune with modern trends in the study of Late Antiquity, which is no longer seen as the twilight of ancient civilization, but as a period of change and transformation with its own significance, not simply as a "bridge" between antiquity and the Middle Ages. An important place in the scientific pursuits of Ch. Kirilov is also occupied by the questions about the origin, development and demise of the late antique hill top settlements (Appendices 5 and 8). The attempt to clarify the economic logic for the existence of this type of settlement sites sheds considerable light on a number of problems related to mining, production and trade in cereals and not least the role of the Balkans in the imperial system of Early Byzantium.

The publications on the medieval castle (appendix 4), on the identification of the residence of the Cherven Metropolitans (appendix 7) and on the localization of the city of Constantia captured by Tsar Kaloyan (appendix 9) shed new light on the historical geography of the medieval Balkans and on the character of "feudalism" in our lands in the era of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. In his research, Chavdar Kirilov also pays attention to the demographic changes in the lands between the Danube and Stara Planina during the Byzantine rule (app. 6), as well as to separate categories of finds, such as the so-called heel irons (app. 10).

The works with which assist. prof. Dr. Chavdar Kirilov participated in the competition for the academic position of associate professor in PN 2.2. History and Archeology (Archaeology – Medieval Archaeology), as well as nine more studies, three articles, one book chapter and 27 communications in the series Archaeological Discoveries and Excavations (individual and co-authored) indicated in Appendix 10, show high scientific qualities and are distinguished with the critical and discussion approach that has become characteristic of the author. The careful observation of the artifacts and field situations, the in-depth reading of both ancient authors and modern publications, give Chavdar Kirilov the opportunity to formulate ideas and hypotheses, which often come into conflict with opinions expressed up to now and established in historiography. The same criticality is also observed in the texts of the master's theses written and defended under his supervision, which unequivocally testifies that Dr. Kirilov, in addition to being an outstanding scholar, is also a good teacher, directing his students not only to gather information, but above all to its interpretation.

In conclusion of all that has been stated, I vote convinced "For" the awarding of assist. prof. Dr. Chavdar Yanakiev Kirilov in the academic position of "associate professor" under PN 2.2. History and Archeology (Archaeology – Medieval Archaeology).



20. 11. 2023.

Assoc. prof. Dr. Ivan Valchev