

Promotion Review of a Candidate's Application for Professorship

by Prof. Liliana V. Simeonova, Institute for Balkan Studies & Center of Thracology (BAS), on behalf of Roumen Zhivkov Boiadzhiev, the only applicant for the academic position of professor in Professional Field 2.2: History and Archaeology, Research Area: Late Antiquity (Christian Prosopography), advertised in *DV* 31/12.04.2019.

The applicant Roumen Boiadzhiev has provided the full set of documents, as mandated by *ZRASRB*. The documents submitted in support of the application are listed in his application letter to the Rector of Sofia University.

The assessment of Assoc. Prof. Boiadzhiev's documented academic results is, as follows: Indicators in Group A: a total of 50 credits; Indicators in Group B: a total of 100 credits; Indicators in Group C: a total of 100 credits; Indicators in Group D: a total of 200 credits; Indicators in Group E: a total of 170 credits; Indicators in Group F: a total of 100 credits. (Please note that, in this review, the alphabetical list of indicators is given in accordance with the Latin alphabet order while in the original it follows the order of the Cyrillic alphabet.) Dr. Boiadzhiev's teaching load for the years 2013 through 2018 surmounts the minimum requirements. In addition, he has taken part in 6 major research projects, three of which are currently active.

Dr. Boiadzhiev's full list of publications consists of 3 monographs and 20 articles (one of the articles is co-authored with another scholar). The articles are published in several languages, i.e., Bulgarian, German, English, Italian, and Greek. Dr. Boiadzhiev's academic production beyond that which was required for his tenure in 2009 amounts to one monograph and 13 articles. As could be seen from the list of citations, his publications have been widely cited by other scholars working on similar topics.

His main field of research being Late Antique Christianity, Dr. Boiadzhiev covers a wide variety of topics: e.g., early monasticism with an emphasis on female monasticism as well as on the role, which the Benedictine order played in the development of the monastic movement in the West. The spread of Christianity throughout the cities in Northern Africa is another one of Dr. Boiadzhiev's main topics of research.

Dr. Boiadzhiev's most recent monograph is titled *The Lost Africa Sacra*, etc., (Sofia: Paradigma, 2019), 491 pp. + 1 map. It focuses on the Roman provinces of North Africa, and specifically the five old Roman provinces in the Maghreb, in the 4th through the 6th centuries. The book offers an account of the different facets of Late Antique Christianity in North Africa, with an emphasis on Christian urbanism, bishops, and saintly women. In addition, there is an appendix to the text containing a prosopographical corpus of local female saints and other Christian women who appear to have lived in the 4th through the 7th century.

Boiadzhiev's approach is interdisciplinary: he draws on a wide variety of sources (literary, epigraphic and archaeological) in order to examine the transformations occurring in the cities of Latin North Africa in the course of Late Antiquity. He reassesses the varied body of written material that has survived from Africa and, at some points, questions its authorship, audience and function, as well as its historical value to the modern scholar.

As could be seen from the bibliography cited in his monograph, Dr. Boiadzhiev is familiar with the vast corpus of literature on the subject. The book takes account of recent research on topics such as the barbarian 'invasions' in Latin North Africa, periodization, and questions of decline or continuity, as well as the current interest in Church councils, Orthodoxy and heresy. The author pays special attention to the economic situation in the West African "Horn" in the 4th through the 6th century. If Boiadzhiev's book would be published as a revised and updated edition, I suggest that he should add to his bibliography G. Sears, *Late Roman African Urbanism. Continuity and Transformation in the City* [BAR International Series 1693], published in 2007. (Boiadzhiev is familiar with Sears's most recent book, i.e., *The Cities of Roman Africa*. Stroud, 2011).

Having offered a short survey of the history of North-Western Africa in the period that starts with the 2nd century BC and ends in the 6th century AD, Boiadzhiev then presents a more detailed account of what he calls "the provincial situation in Late Antique North Africa" in the 3rd through the 6th century.

By analyzing the impact of Diocletian's administrative reforms upon the area in question, Boiadzhiev points out that the ancient Province of *Africa Proconsularis*, along with *Numidia* and *Mauretania Caeariensis*, now formed the Diocese of Africa. *Numidia* was at that time divided into two provinces, *Numidia Cirtensis* and *Numidia Militiana (Lambaesis)*, though it was

reunified by Constantine I in AD 313. *Mauretania* was separated into *Mauretania Tingitana*, *Mauretania Caesariensis* and *Mauretania Sitifensis*. *Africa Proconsularis* was divided into three different provinces: the northern part, including Carthage, became the *Province of Zeugitania* (though still known also as *Proconsularis*, because it continued to be governed by a proconsul); the southern portion became the *Province of Byzacena*, administrated from *Hadrumentum*, and *Tripolitana* changed into a separate province, with its capital *Leptis Magna*. More importantly, Diocletian's economic reforms had a great impact on the economic development of those parts of the world. In relation to this, Boiadzhiev pays special attention to the uniqueness of the North African urbanism and economy in that time period. Dr. Boiadzhiev also tackles the nature of the Christianization of the North African cities within the wider urban context. In a case by case study, he considers the appropriation of elements of the classical urban heritage for Christian use and the construction of new Christian buildings.

Martyrs in Latin North Africa are another major topic in Boiadzhiev's book. We gain information about the various phases in the persecution of African Christians primarily from the martyrdom of St. Perpetua and the treatises of Tertullian. In addition to that, Boiadzhiev draws evidence on the treatment of African Christians by the Roman authorities from the *acta* of the African martyrs. As has been noted by Boiadzhiev, the history of the African Church begins in AD 180 with a small group of martyrs. After an interval of twenty years, there was a renewed series of martyrdoms; about the year 200, there was a violent persecution at Carthage and in the provinces held by the Romans. One of the most important events was the martyrdom in Carthage of Perpetua and Felicitas in AD 203.

Carthage was again a focal point of Christian North Africa with the figure of Cyprian, bishop of this town where he was martyred in AD 258. Boiadzhiev dwells upon the collection of letters penned by Cyprian in order to show that, by that time, the Church in North-Western Africa has already become rich and powerful institution. Further, Boiadzhiev presents cases of individual and collective martyrdoms of clerics, soldiers, entire families, and even children. On certain occasions Christians launched brave anti-pagan actions, which ended up with the tortuous death of the people involved in them. For the African Christians, persecution and martyrdom did not end with the edicts of religious tolerance of AD 311 and 313. And even in the 5th century they suffered persecution under the Vandals, a Germanic tribe that, having converted to Arianism,

invaded Roman Africa. (It is worth noting, however, that the attitude of the Arian Christian Vandal government towards the Catholic community was not always adverse.)

As for the bishoprics that were founded in Latin North Africa, their boundaries are hard to be defined. The Roman political authority would periodically rearrange the provincial divisions: on various occasions the ecclesiastical authorities re-adjusted the limits of their respective jurisdictions to those of the civil power. However, while these limits were liable to successive rectification there were cases when they were not even clearly marked. (As regards the uncertainty in the delimitation of the ecclesiastical boundaries of the African Church, A. Leone, “Bishops and Territory: The Case of Late Roman and Byzantine North Africa”, *DOP* 65/66 (2011-2012), pp. 5-27 would be a valuable addition to Boiadzhiev’s bibliography.)

The next section of the book is concerned with the religious changes of the period, and challenges some of the certainties that have arisen in the consideration of North African Christianity, including the tensions between Donatist, Catholic and Arian. Informal primacy was exercised by the Archdiocese of Carthage, a metropolitan archdiocese also known as “Church of Carthage”. As has been noted by Boiadzhiev, North African Christianity reached its peak under St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. He was among the most prolific scholars of the Early Church, his writings covering diverse fields such as theology, philosophy and anthropology. St. Augustine developed his doctrine of the Church principally in reaction to the Donatists. (This sect developed and grew in North Africa causing unrest and threatened riots in Carthage connected to the bishop controversy. As bishop, Augustine campaigned against Donatism; through his efforts, Orthodoxy gained the upper hand.)

The final section of the book is concerned with urbanism in the West African Roman provinces in Late Antiquity. In a case by case study, Boiadzhiev explores the cities of the five provinces in that area, namely *Africa Proconsularis*, *Numidia*, *Byzacena*, *Mauretania Sitifensis*, and *Mauretania Caesarensis*, highlighting the connection between the historical sources and the archaeological events. In the 6th century, under Byzantine rule bishops appear to have had a very important role in managing properties. The connection recorded between churches and productive complexes in urban areas suggests, on the one hand, the existence of a productive

activity controlled by the Church and, on the other hand, the presence of rules, which controlled the reuse of buildings in urban areas in that time period.

As an appendix at the end of Boiadziev's monograph, there is a prosopographical corpus containing data about the Christian women in North Africa in the 4th through the 7th century (*Prosopographia Feminarum Christianarum, Pars II /Africa, Saec. IV-VII/*). This corpus is a sequel to – or rather an extended version of – an earlier work of Boiadziev's, which is titled *Prosopographia Feminarum Christianarum /Saec. IV-VI/, Pars I*. Sources cited include histories, literary texts, inscriptions, and miscellaneous written sources. While the three-volume PLRE (*Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 1970–1992) collectively describes many of the people attested or claimed to have lived in the Roman Empire from AD 260 to AD 641 Boiadziev's focus on the Christian women of Latin Africa in Late Antiquity contains information, which throws additional light on the topic of his monograph.

The period under discussion in Boiadziev's book, from the 4th through the 6th century, bore witness to more than political transitions and administrative re-organization: it saw the adoption of Christianity in Roman North Africa, Germanic rule and Arianism, and the Byzantine *reconquista* under Justinian the Great. The five provinces in the north-west of Africa that are chosen by Boiadziev present different aspects: while there are areas characterized by intensive urbanization there are also other areas (such as *Byzacena*) with a lower quantity of urban areas. Boiadziev's *Africa Sacra* fits into a recent stream of research, which is the result of a rise in interest toward Late Antiquity in North Africa. In an effort to systematically examine and organize the data available, Boiadziev has encompassed a wide range of material, including publications from the mid-1800s to modern times. In addition to the extraordinary amount of material, extensively researched, Boiadziev's *Africa Sacra* breaks ground on the introduction of the study of Late Antique African Christianity in modern Bulgarian historiography.

As I have already noted, through the rest of his publications Dr. Boiadziev has also contributed to the study of Late Antique Christianity by exploring topics such as the emergence of female monasticism in Rome and the Eastern Mediterranean, the early monastic movement in Western Europe and the role, which the Benedictines played in it, the spread of Christianity amongst women in the era of Constantine the Great, and so on.

After taking into consideration both the candidate's documented academic results and his contributions to the research field of Late Antique Christianity, I highly recommend him for the academic position of professor. As a member of the Election Committee, I vote in the affirmative for him to get elected as professor in Professional Field 2.2: History and Archaeology, Research Area: Late Antiquity.

12 July 2019

Signature: