

**Promotion Statement of a Candidate's Application for the Academic Position "Associate Professor" at the Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"**

by

Prof. Alexandar Nikolov Nikolov, PhD

Department of Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History

Faculty of History, University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski"

on behalf of Chief Ass. Professor Milena Ivanova Petkova, PhD

Professional field: 2.2 History and Archaeology (History of the Bulgarian Lands, 15th-17th Centuries)

advertised in  
DV,105/11.12.2020.

**1. Procedure Information:**

The Associate Professorship competition was announced for the needs of the Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Department of History of Bulgaria. The only applicant for the position is Chief Ass. Prof. Milena Ivanova Petkova. The documents submitted by her meet the requirements of the ZRASRB (Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria) and in essence provide an opportunity to evaluate her 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:**

Milena Petkova graduated from the Faculty of History at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with a Master's Degree in History in 2003 (Bachelor Degree obtained in 2001, the same specialty). After defending her master's thesis, she was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Bulgarian History and successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on "Demographic development and agricultural economics in the Eastern part of the Thracian lowlands in the XVI century." in 2009.

Even during her doctoral studies Milena Petkova specialized in historical demography, Ottoman Turkish language and Ottoman Turkish paleography and diplomacy. In 2010 and 2011 she was a research fellow at the American Research Institute in Istanbul, and subsequently a postdoctoral fellow at the Doctoral and Postdoctoral Institute "Dialogue Europe", Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

From 2012 to 2015 Milena Petkova worked at State Agency "Archives", Directorate "Publicity of Archives" as a chief expert in the department "Promotional activity and international cooperation". She has been a part-time assistant at the Department of History of Bulgaria in 2010 and 2015. Since August 2016 she holds the position of Chief Assistant at the Department of History of Bulgaria, Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Milena Petkova has implemented two independent projects, was the leader of two more projects and a member of the team in four other projects with topics related to her scientific specialty, as well as problems of economic and demographic history, ecology, etc . She was an expert in translation and publicity for the project "Expressionism - The Eternal Dance of Life" and coordinator for Bulgaria, YES "Archives" of "Archives Portal Europe APEx - network for excellence" in the period 2013-2015.

The candidate is fluent in English, French, Russian, Turkish and Italian, and also specializes in Ottoman Turkish, diplomacy and paleography. Everything listed so far suggests that her diverse and rich scientific and project activities are based on serious professional skills and efforts.

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

According to the requirements of the competition, Dr. Petkova presented both a list of all her publications and a separate list of publications that participate in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor". Before dwelling on the second list and the publications in it, I would like to note that the list of the entire scientific production of Dr. Petkova is impressive.

Here are included two monographs - one based on her doctoral dissertation and the habilitation thesis with which she participated in the competition. In addition, Dr. Petkova is the author of 17 scientific articles, 6 scientific studies, organizer of 6 exhibitions and translator of 3 books. She is the editor of a scientific collection dedicated to the Yuruqs in the Balkans.

Furthermore Milena Petkova has 14 participations in various conferences and forums and is a member of two editorial boards. Of her articles, 5 are in English, 1 in Turkish and 1 in German. Three of the 6 studies are in English and one is in French. She has published in prestigious magazines and collections of essays at home and abroad.

The attached reference of the observed citations contains 14 citations, most of them in prestigious international publications. All that has been said so far testifies to a high-quality and voluminous scientific production, which fully meets the requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor". The whole teaching, scientific and teaching activity is excellently presented in the references attached by the candidate, which are impeccably organized.

In the competition Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Petkova participates with her two monographs, with four studies and 9 articles in various scientific journals and collections. I will focus on her two monographs, and also present her other works in an attempt at a certain typology based on their content.

In the first place, this is the habilitation monograph "Between Anatolia and Rumelia: The Yuruqs and the Economic Zoning of Parts of the Central Balkans, from the Middle of the 15th to the Middle of the 16th Centuries." , Sofia: IK Gutenberg, 2021, ISBN: 978-619-176-182-1.

This monograph is devoted to the migration of the Yuruqs - a semi-nomadic community from Anatolia in the Central Balkans and in particular in the area of the Upper Thracian Lowland, its adaptation to the new natural and economic conditions and its gradual sedentarization. All this is placed in the broader context of the Ottoman colonization of the Balkans, the interaction of the new

settlers with the old population and the transformation of their way of life in accordance with the new natural, social, demographic and political conditions.

The detailed analysis of the terminology from the Ottoman sources, which marked this process, is impressive. Dr. Petkova shows an enviable ability to work with a variety of sources and their skillful interpretation, which gives us a full-blooded picture of a complex process that took place over a century. Drawing on the previous research of the Yuruq corps and the Yuruq colonization, Dr. Petkova was able to enrich the analysis of the very concept of "Yuruq" in all its complexity and multi-layered essence, showing its gradual disappearance from use, where the transformation from semi-nomadic to a fully settled way of life was realized within the study period.

An important contribution is the comparative analysis of the settlements of the Yuruqs in Upper Thrace and Karaman, through which the process of adaptation and transformation acquires even clearer features. The analysis of the term "karye" as an important marker for the emerging settlement network, the study of the tax policy of the Ottoman authorities in the researched regions in its dynamics, the structure of the settlement network, economic life and literally all important aspects accompanying the topic of migration of the Yuruqs in the studied chronological segment and geographical area, are also impressive.

The second monograph, presented in the competition and entitled "The Central Balkans and the Ottomans: Demographic Development and Agrarian Economy in the Eastern Part of the Thracian Lowland in the 16th Century", Sofia, Gutenberg Publishing House, 2020, ISBN: 978-619-176-177-7, is based on the candidate's doctoral dissertation, but in fact Milena Petkova's interest in this issue dates back to her master's thesis, dedicated to the region of Stara Zagora in the period under consideration.

In this monograph the candidate has developed a full-blooded and comprehensive picture of the Ottoman colonization and assimilation of the former kazas of Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Nova Zagora and Chirpan in the 16th century. Here the settlement network in the region, the ethno-religious structure and the migrations of the population in the aforesaid area are considered successively. The structure of the agrarian economy on the territory of the Stara Zagora district in the 16th century is researched in detail.

The study reveals the separation of two zones: a foothill zone with stable old Christian settlements, administratively dependent to the Nikopol Sandzhak, which zone was settled by the Bulgarian population in the time of the Second Bulgarian Czarism and lowland sparsely populated area, which was inhabited by Ottoman colonists in turn. They adapted to local conditions, settled

down and created their own settlement network in the newly acquired territories. The research is backed by very detailed and well-interpreted material from the Ottoman registers, but also by attracting many other sources that give us information about environmental, demographic and political processes in the area and period.

The presented studies and articles can be grouped thematically as follows:

1. Three English-language studies published in prestigious Ottoman Studies magazines. They are dedicated mainly to the history of the Eski Zaghra kaza in the period 15th-17th centuries and are related to the history of the center of the kaza, the development of the agrarian space in the district and the process of sedentarization of the Yuruq settlers.
2. A study in Bulgarian, dedicated to the elements of Ottoman urban architecture in Stara Zagora in the period 16th-17th centuries.
3. Nine articles, of which 4 (2 in Bulgarian, one in Turkish and one in English) are devoted to problems of the agrarian and administrative history of the kazas of Stara Zagora and Haskovo - a topic that is central to the previous research of the candidate. Of particular interest is the article devoted to the possible delineation of the southern border of the Tarnovo Czarism on the basis of Ottoman administrative documents.

In another article, in English, Milena Petkova explores the issue of the possible settlement of Hungarian prisoners of war in Thrace in the 17th century. In a joint publication with Nadya Manolova-Nikolova, the candidate focuses on the problem of the plague epidemic that raged in Thrace in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. We should also mention a publication dedicated to documents and images from the First World War, as well as a preface co-written with Maria Shusharova to a collection of Ottoman documents on the history of Sevlievo.

In general, we can summarize that the scientific production presented by the candidate is of enviable quality, we can say that it fully meets the international scientific standards and shows the researcher's qualities of Milena Petkova in full. Her scientific performance is a convincing argument for her candidacy for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in History of the Bulgarian Lands in the 15th-17th centuries.

### **3. Conclusion:**

The teaching, research and project activity of Chief Assistant Professor Milena Ivanova Petkova 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: 2.2. History and Archeology (History of the Bulgarian Lands in the 15th-17th centuries.) to Chief Ass. Prof. Milena Ivanova Petkova, PhD and wish the candidate further professional success.

07.04. 2021

Sofia

Signature:

/Prof. Alexandar Nikolov, PhD/