

ASSESSMENT

on the application of Assoc. Prof. Roumen Zhivkov Boyadzhiev, PhD, Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies “Prof. Ivan Dujčev”, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for Professorship in the Professional area 2.2. History and Archaeology (History of Late Antiquity: Christian Prosopography)

by Prof. Dr. Habil. Mirena Hristova Slavova, Department of Classics, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

The only applicant, Assoc. Prof. Rumen Boyadzhiev, PhD, is entirely eligible for obtaining the Professor position in accordance with the Art. 115 of the Regulations for the conditions and the order for acquiring academic degrees and occupying academic positions at the Sofia University.

He participates in the competition with three monographs, one of which is his habilitation study, and the other two deal with issues related to the topic of the competition.

Since his doctoral dissertation, Assoc. Prof. Boyadzhiev’s research interests have been centered on the history of Christianity. In the publications submitted for the competition, I outline two more particular research fields – the distribution and characteristics of early Christianity on the periphery of *Pax Romana* (“The Lost Africa Sacra” Monograph (491 pages) and Christianity and Women – *St. Jerome and St. Augustine. Prosopographic Portraits and Letters to / and for Women* (175 p.) and *From the Sunset of Late Antiquity to the Rising of the Middle Ages. Senior Clergy and their Correspondence with Christian Women in the V–VI Century* (132 p.).

The most significant contribution of the candidate demonstrated in all of his publications is his attempt to look into the history of Christianity in a certain geographic area and historical period not just as a historian, but rather as a historian of culture. It is precisely this cultural-anthropological engagement of the author which most appeals to me as a philologist and which makes him look at the fate of the characters in the epigraphic monuments, statistically establish the number of temples or restore the life

path of a particular person against the backdrop of the major social and religious changes during the Late Antiquity.

It is this scientific curiosity about the human person in the swirl of great ideological displacements that makes him look at both the personalities of the great Christian fathers of Late Antiquity and the female figures of zealous Christian women in a completely masculinely oriented epoch.

These qualities of Boyadzhiev's research predetermine his special interest in the early Christian prosopography, to which his works make significant additions and contributions. For example, only in the two newly published monographs which I mentioned above, the candidate discusses the persons of 150 *feminae clarissimae* – addressees of the letters or referred to in the letters and works of senior Christian clergymen from 5-6. century. These recent monographs are characterized by clear structure, enviable bibliographic awareness, and a captivating pen. Their author skillfully combines prosopographic lemmas both with an analysis of the socio-cultural background of the era and an in-depth look at the steps in the establishment of Christianity.

I also appreciate the candidate's effort to rely on rich historical sources for studying both the characteristics of Christianization in different provinces of the Roman Empire and the specificity of the female presence in the womb of the Christian Church – literary, archaeological, epistolary and epigraphic materials whose interpretation requires great professionalism and scrupulous work.

The voluminous monograph on the Christianization of North Africa incorporates the accumulated professional assets of the researcher, who demonstrates here a detailed knowledge of the geographical, historical, and confessional issues in the area in the framework of the common processes in Late Antiquity in the Mediterranean basin. The monograph presents Dr. Boyadzhiev as a distinguished and qualified specialist in this more or less exotic for the Bulgarian research subject area.

Quotations and his peer reviewed publications prove this statement.

I also appreciate the candidate's teaching experience underlying that his qualification is successfully integrated into Sofia University's educational programs. The

two e-books in the list of publications speak of his commitment to the educational process and its optimization.

In addition, Dr. Boyadzhiev's involvement in national and international projects qualifies him as an authoritative scientist with ability to participate in large research projects and to attract external funding for the development of research.

In conclusion: My overall evaluation of the application under review is positive. Therefore, I suggest to the esteemed board that Associate Professor Roumen Boyadzhiev, PhD, obtain the academic position "Professor" in professional area 2.2. History and Archeology (History of Late Antiquity: Christian Prosopography).

Sofia

29th October 2020

Prof. Dr. Habil. Mirena Slavova