

SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

FACULTY OF HISTORY

## STATEMENT

under the procedure for defense of a dissertation on a topic

**"Authority and Ideology in the Early Neo-Assyrian Empire (934–745 B.C.)"**

For acquiring of the educational and scientific degree "PhD"

by

Candidate: **Zozan Mehmet Tarhan**

Scientific area: **2. Humanities**

Professional field: **2.2. History and Archaeology**

Doctoral program: **„Ancient history” - Ancient history**, department "Ancient history, Thracian studies and Mediaeval history"

Academic supervisor: **Prof. Dr.Dr.Sc. Dilyana Boteva**

Statement author:

Akademischer Oberrat Privatdozent Dr. Claus Ambos, Julius-Maximilians-Universität  
Würzburg

member of the scientific jury by order № РД 38-562/ 26.11.2021 г. of the Rector of Sofia University

This statement is based on the English summary of Zozan Tarhan's PhD thesis and English chapters of her PhD manuscript, specifically on the field of cult, ritual and religion. I can also refer to personal knowledge of the author, who during the winter semester 2019/2020 and the summer semester 2020 participated in several Akkadian language courses I held at Würzburg University. Her accomplishment was outstanding. During her stay I was also able to discuss the respective chapters with Mrs. Tarhan and their importance to the topic of her thesis in a fruitful way.

The Neo-Assyrian Empire dominated the Near East during a considerable span of time during the first half of the first millennium BC. Scholarly interest has often been focussed on the later history of the

Neo-Assyrian Empire under the rulers of the Sargonids. With her interest on the *early* Neo-Assyrian period Zozan Tarhan thus tackles a desideratum of Assyriology. The reigns of Aššur-dān II. (934-912) and his successors until Adad-nērārī III. and his heirs (until 745 BC), treated by Zozan Tarhan, was in fact the very period, when the foundations of the later Neo-Assyrian Empire of the Sargonids were laid. Thus this epoch merits indeed a special attention, and it is a welcome fact that the author has written her thesis about this time.

The PhD thesis of Zozan Tarhan is a significant work of scholarship. The author gives proof that she has mastered a vast amount of primary sources relevant for the topic of her work, but she is also aware of the pertinent secondary scholarly literature hitherto published. Behind the topic "authority and ideology" Zozan Tarhan deals in fact with a vast amount of important issues, such as cult and religion, building activities, military campaigns, geography, and internal and foreign affairs. All these topics are indeed relevant for the subject of the thesis. Zozan Tarhan has managed not to lose herself in this complexity of issues but succeeded to keep track of all the pertinent source material and to present it in a clear and structured way.

It should be emphasized that Zozan Tarhan is not only using written sources, but is also aware of the pertinent archaeological and iconographic evidence, i.e. the palaces of the Assyrian kings and the iconographic programme displayed there on large relief cycles.

The present reviewer has worked intensively on cult, religion and ritual in the Ancient Near East, and this is in fact a topic which in earlier studies has not always been included in the discussion of authority and ideology in the Neo-Assyrian Empire in a satisfying way. Especially in including the so-called "Middle-Assyrian Coronation Ritual" in her PhD thesis, Zozan Tarhan has delivered important results, since it gives us insights in the understanding of the development of Assyrian royal ideology before the Empire of the Sargonids.

I would recommend that in the future be published also in an English version of this work to make it accessible to a wider scholarly public, which will gain much knowledge of this book.

Based on the above-said, **I recommend** to the scientific jury to award Zozan Mehmet Tarhan the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific area 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology.



Signature:

Date: Würzburg, 22.12.2021  
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