

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Todor Raychev Todorov, PhD, Shumen University

Regarding a procedure announced in the State Gazette № 21 on 15 March 2022 for the academic position of PROFESSOR by Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, according to the Bulgarian legislation in Professional Field 2.2. History and Archeology (History of Medieval Bulgaria - History of Samuel’s Bulgaria) for the needs of the Faculty of History

The procedure has been announced in the State Gazette after the relevant decisions were made by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of History and the Academic Council of Sofia University. A scientific jury has been appointed within the regulated term and in compliance with the respective procedure. Within the period appointed by the law, documents for participation in the procedure have been submitted by one candidate who meets the national requirements for the academic position of “professor”, according to Art. 2b of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The only candidate to the procedure is **Assoc. Prof. Georgi Nikolov, PhD**. Since 1990, his research and teaching career have been inextricably related to the Faculty of History at Sofia University. Over the last more than three decades, Georgi Nikolov has consistently taken up the academic positions of “assistant professor” (1990), “senior assistant professor” (1994), “chief assistant professor” (1997) and “associate professor” (2011). In 2001 he obtained the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”. The candidate’s educational career is mainly related to the teaching of lectures and seminars in the discipline of Medieval Bulgarian History. Under the academic supervision of Assoc. Prof. G. Nikolov, two dissertations have been successfully defended.

According to the submitted documents, the only candidate participates in the procedure with one monograph, which has the status of habilitation work and 32 studies and articles. In view of the thematic fields of research, this scientific production, in my opinion, can be divided into several groups.

The first group includes research dedicated to the last four decades of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, ie. the so-called Samuel's Bulgaria. In terms of numbers, this group is the largest and in practice illustrates the main thematic field in the scientific work of G. Nikolov in the last 10 years. Naturally, the leading position here is occupied by the monograph "Iz istoriyata na Samuilova Bulgaria" / "From the History of Samuel's Bulgaria" (Appendix №1). The main part of this work begins with the problem of the origin of comitopules - a question that has excited several generations of Bulgarian and foreign researchers. To this undoubtedly debatable problem, the author adds additional arguments to the thesis that the family of Samuel "is blood related to the dynasty of Khan Krum." In this part G. Nikolov also points out evidences that Samuel is the eldest of the sons of comes Nichola. The next problem to which the author draws attention is the blinding of 15,000 Bulgarian soldiers by Basil II in 1014. In this part G. Nikolov, based on a comprehensive examination of all known sources, rightly rejects the recently stated thesis that such blinding had never happened. In the third part of the monograph the circumstances around the deaths of the last rulers of the First Bulgarian Kingdom - Boris II, Roman, Samuel, Gavril-Radomir and John-Vladislav are subjected to a detailed analysis. The fourth part (it is also the most voluminous) traces the role and place of the historical-geographical region of Macedonia in the history of medieval Bulgaria. Here the leading thesis advocated by G. Nikolov is that regardless of the dynamic fate of the region and the change of political power in certain periods the Bulgarian ethnic image of Macedonia does not change. After this brief presentation of

the candidate's habilitation thesis, I feel obliged to state that regardless of the debatable nature of the issues raised in it (especially in the first and second parts), there is no doubt that a valuable monographic research is presented to the scientific community. Important contributions are found in this work, which are related to the last decades of the First Bulgarian Kingdom. The same definition can be given to the other publications in this first group. Among them I should highlight those that illustrate the historiographical contributions of G. Nikolov to summarize the interest in Tsar Samuel and the era he embodied in the research from the mid-eighteenth century to the present day (Appendices № 2, 3, 12).

The second group of research with which the candidate participates in the procedure includes various works, dedicated to problems in the history of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. Of these, I have to single out, without a doubt, the studies and articles which contribute to shedding additional light on the first decades of the history of the revived Bulgarian Kingdom (Appendices № 8, 25, 28).

The third group, according to my classification, includes studies by G. Nikolov, concerning the history of the First Bulgarian Kingdom in the 9th - 60s of the 10th century. In this group we should mention the article, which again raises the question of the date of Baptism (Appendix № 19). There is no doubt that a significant contribution makes the study related to the titles and appeals of the rulers of the First Bulgarian Kingdom (Appendix №6), as well as the chapter of the collective monograph examining the Bulgarian state system during the reign of Tsar Peter I (Appendix № 11).

Finally, in this general review of the publications of G. Nikolov, with which he participated in the procedure, I should point out his study on the periodization of medieval Bulgarian history (Appendix № 4). Here I completely agree with the candidate

that this is the first specific study on this topic. I also think that it presents G. Nikolov as an established and erudite specialist and lecturer in medieval Bulgarian history.

The 178 citations of candidate's works by Bulgarian and foreign researchers are indisputable proof that G. Nikolov's research has reached its main addressees (representatives of the scientific community) and has contributed to the development of medieval studies.

In conclusion, all the materials presented in the procedure and my long-term personal impressions give me reason to point out that the professional training, research contributions and teaching career of Assoc. Prof. Georgi Nikolov, PhD are of a high standard. He fully meets the necessary requirements according to the current legislation and regulations. All this gives me the reason to confidently vote in favor of giving the scientific position of "Professor" to Assoc. Prof. Georgi Nikolov, PhD in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and archeology (History of medieval Bulgaria - History of Samuel's Bulgaria).



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Shumen

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