

**To the Scientific Jury, appointed
by the Rector of Sofia University
by Order No. RD-38-
487/08.08.2023.**

SCIENTIFIC OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Simeon Groysman, Sofia University Faculty of Law
regarding

contest

for the appointment of the academic position of “Professor” of Constitutional Law
with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Kirilov Belov as candidate

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Distinguished members of the scientific jury,

1. Grounds for the preparation of this Opinion.

By Order of the Rector of Sofia University No. RD-38-487/08.08.2023 I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to conduct the competition for the academic position of "Professor" of Constitutional Law. By a decision of the same jury at its meeting of 10th of October, I have been entrusted with the drafting of this opinion, which I am submitting to your attention within the time limit set for this purpose.

2. Fulfilment of the requirements for the position.

The candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Belov meets the requirements of Art. 115, par. 1 of the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Holding of Academic Positions at the Sofia University for the academic position of Professor. The same is evidenced by the documents submitted by the candidate, which show that:

(a) Martin Belov has a PhD in 3.6 Law (Constitutional Law) with the dissertation titled “Direct Democracy– national and comparative legal aspects”, defended in 2009;

(b) He is holding the position of Associate Professor at the Sofia University Faculty of Arts as of 2018, thus fulfilling the requirement to have held the same position for at least two academic years;

(c) The monographic work entitled “Constitutional Semiotics”, Sofia University Publishing House, 2022, 398 p., which is discussed in the next section, does not repeat the works and the respective contributions that Belov demonstrated in order to obtain the degree of PhD (see "a" above) and later to be appointed as Associate Professor. The latter is evident from his account of scientific contributions used for his then tenure as Associate Professor.¹

¹ Online access to the documents under the older procedure: https://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/bul/universitet_t/fakulteti/yuridicheski_fakultet/proceduri_za_nauchni_stepeni_i_akademichni_dl_zhnosti/proceduri_po_zaemane_na_akademichni_dl_zhnosti/yuridicheski_fakultet_arhiv_konkursi/konkurs_za_za_emane_na_akademichnata_dl_zhnost_docent_po_profesionalno_napravlenie_3_6_pravo_konstitucionno_pravo_oby

(d) In addition to his monograph the applicant has submitted other original research works – 18 studies and 5 articles, evaluated in section 4 of this opinion.

(e) Compliance of the candidature with the minimum national requirements for the post was established by this Scientific Jury by a conclusion taken at its first meeting held on 10th of October. It should be stressed that the candidate clearly overperforms the established minimum national requirements. The applicant has thus demonstrated the breadth and high quality of both his project work and the wide response to his work, which has been repeatedly cited in Bulgaria and abroad.

(f) There are no obstacle to holding the position of professor, as set forth in the cited internal Regulations of Sofia University.

3. Evaluation of the submitted second habilitation thesis “Constitutional Semiotics”, Sofia University Publishing House, 2022, 398 p.

The formal nature of texts such as this opinion does not imply that they should have any additional value attached to them for their limited number of readers. Moreover, the complex subject matter on which the candidate Belov has developed his “second habilitation” makes the task of those evaluating him considerably more difficult. In spite of these two inconveniences, I will try to convey my reflection on the text of the book through a certain scheme, facilitating a future reader of the book and, I hope, giving useful feedback to its author.

I form this positive opinion under a definitely positive impression. I began quoting the book under review here to my students before I even proceeded to write this review. Certain *critical* remarks I will make, but not following the etymology of the word– as a physician looking at the turning point (from the ancient Greek κρίσις²) in a disease to judge whether a patient will survive. In front of my analysis is a perfectly healthy, polemical work that cannot fail to arouse

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² On the medical sense of κρίσις (crisis, but also judgment-judgment) and the physician-judge who judges (from the ancient Greek κρίνω, hence critique, κριτική) the outlook of his patient, see G. **Agamben**, *Pilate and Jesus*, Adam Kotsko (trans.), Stanford University Press, 2013, p. 13.

discussion. My substantive criticism, however – given here because it will determine the structure of the opinion – is that Belov does not always define the concepts he introduces. Perhaps he would respond that – by generalizing whole types of thinking, his innovative concepts are not subject to strict definition. This justifies his choice to base his exposition not on definition but on a coherent analysis of individual phenomena, professing constitutional semiotics as a “strategic analytical paradigm” (p. 39). Belov does not tell us outright what things are, he tells us how they work. The result of this methodological choice is further complicated by the multiplicity of different constitutive elements in the concepts under consideration. For example, the constitutional imagination contains “*normative ideologies, normative ideas, constitutional myths and mythologies, constitutional memories, dreams, and... [other] forms of its own*” (p. 140). Constitutional semiotics, according to the author, understands constitutionalism as “*a game of imaginaries, a game of imagination, and a game of codes,*” (p. 166) adding *constitutional utopias*. The social impact of constitutionalism aimed at motivating collective action is introduced in an alternative order as “*constitutional rapture and enchantment... constitutional inspiration [and] fascination*” (p. 170).

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the author has constructed a complex system of different concepts, the further analysis of which is carried out through subsequent lines of innovative concepts, or at least those in which Belov invests his own meaning. The construction presented to us is heuristically successful. At the same time – here comes the critical remark – my deep methodological creed of science as “thinking in rigorous terms” leads me to believe that Belov's chosen approach hinders his own quest for metasemiosis – the creation and transmission of scientific knowledge about signification, signs and signifieds concerning constitutionalism. In this view, I will proceed in reverse, beginning with a series of definitions. Thus, at the risk of not always being right, I will try to extract certain definitions from the peer-reviewed monograph so that I can then reflect on its ambitious project.

(a) General overview.

Semiotics is a large-scale branch of humanities and social sciences that studies the process (semiosis) of creating and conveying the meaning of certain **signified** phenomena through **signs**. Sign communication takes place in a particular discourse, but – insofar as there are multiple levels

of analysis, shared notions and in general multiple “conversations” about constitutional phenomena, Belov considers **constitutionalism as a multi-discursive phenomenon** (p. 19). This includes notions of (α) the existence of multiple relations of signification between signifieds and signs pointing to their meaning and (β) constitutional analysis of a range of constitutional phenomena in, but also particularly importantly– “beyond positive constitutional law” (p. 33).

The author bases the idea of developing a constitutional semiotics on the view that constitutional law (norms and principles) together with constitutionalism (the ideology of the constitutional state) find expression in (are denoted by) a series of interrelated systems.

As such systems, bearing constitutional meaning, Belov interconnects:

– **Textual constitutionalism**. This is a research orientation that places the focus of constitution and constitutional law on legal texts. From this point of view, the text of the constitution [as Ought] incorporates certain socio-political phenomena [as Is], so that the constitution contains signifier-signs for certain signified-meanings of the life of society. Conversely, the constitution contains certain signified-meaning phenomena that de facto receive signifier-signs in social life (pp. 84-86). The textual dimension of constitutional law gives its overall organization. At the same time this textual dimension goes beyond the constitutional text and constitutes a broader system of the texts adding decisions of constitutional courts, texts of constitutional doctrine, reaching even to the texts of the daily press (p. 115) as part of the broader public conversation about politics.

– **Rational constitutionalism** represents a modernist way of thinking, based on the ability of social science to delineate the legal dimensions of the state structure, the constitutional legislator to translate it into operative law, and as a result, on the path of a deliberate reform of societies to follow a progressive path of development, including an element of political radicalism (pp. 63-65).

Importantly, however, in Belov's interpretation, constitutional norms and principles operate only through collective faith and imagination, i.e., opening constitutionalism to the reality of certain irrational understandings as well. The rationalist approach – in a paradoxical way, according to the author – creates modern constitutions, but they function on an irrational basis – through the belief in the rationalists' constructed “constitutional myths and mythologies and even

utopias” (p. 66), i.e. in an “imaginary reality based on social trust, emotions and psychological perceptions” (p. 76). It is this understanding that leads the author to present subsequent “constitutionalisms” that go beyond the purely textual dimension of constitutional law.

– **Quantum constitutionalism.** Belov calls quantum constitutionalism “the conceptual and methodological approach that views constitutional law through the lens of the cognitive indeterminacy of legal text, textuality, and meaning” with their “inevitable fuzziness, variability, and indeterminacy” (p. 41). The idea of quantum constitutionalism emphasizes the multivariate nature (see p. 50) of possible outcomes of legal interpretation and lends scientific legitimacy to legal realist analyses that recognize the reality of phenomena such as judicial activism (p. 44). This potentiality embedded in otherwise “rigid” constitutional texts creates the first doubt about the wholly rational character of constitutional thinking and the ability of constitutional texts alone to be sufficient to create the overall constitutional order without further networking of their interpreters and mediators of meaning creating clarity in the face of quantum instability.

The “alternative” dimensions of constitutional thinking are expressed in different types of behaviour and express in a symbolic and condensed way certain notions of constitutional norms and principles and constitutional ideology. In this sense, it becomes clear that constitutional semiotics studies the transmission of constitutional messages (messages about norms, principles and ideology) in “text, narrative, image and behaviour” at all possible levels (pp. 80-81).

– **Symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism** in Belov's account is primarily a discourse (see p. 139) in which “collective perceptions of constitutionally relevant phenomena and their preservation in the form of constitutional imaginaries are created and maintained” (see p. 131, where “constitutional imagination” is defined). To speak of such “constitutionalism” becomes possible for two reasons:

(α) The Constitution as a written source of law becomes a symbol of the statehood and independence of the constitutional community becomes a symbol expressed in textual form (p. 113).

(β) The Constitution, next and foremost, itself contains “symbols, codes and imaginaries”

by which it represents an imagined reality (p. 120) – ultimately the ideal due state of society, in the way constitutional law imagines it.

In such a perspective, symbolic-imaginative constitutionalism as a domain of collective imagination and possibly as a scholarly trend exploring this domain is based on the idea that constitutional law leaves a certain imprint on individual minds and thinking on constitutionally relevant issues becomes part of a “collective constitutional conscious, subconscious and unconscious” of the community (p. 131).

– **Visual constitutionalism** is a constitutional discourse of symbolic-visual representation of constitutional ideas derived from the textual being of constitutional law (pp. 242-243).

– **Performative constitutionalism** designates the sector of (and thinking about) those phenomena conditioned by constitutional law that are associated with acts of national ritual, protocol events, or political demonstrations such as “parades manifestations and ceremonies... swearing-in... and... inaugurations” (p. 246).

Belov oriented the next two “constitutionalisms” to the depths of human psychology. The sought-for constitutional relation of the irrational part of our behavior is found in the existence of “constitutionally” stimulated emotions. There is also a connection between constitutional matter and our deepest convictions and resulting goals, which are not subject to judgment by the measures of everyday pragmatism. Humans are in a natural search for something “higher” that ultimately links the explanatory schemes of the constitutional with the transcendent. Thus:

– **Emotional constitutionalism**, on the other hand, is a provisional name that recognizes the fact of the existence of collective social emotions related to constitutional themes and stimulated by the impact of certain constitutions or the constitutional imagination based on them (p. 245).

– **Transcendental constitutionalism** is an approach to, or sector of, constitutionalism that emphasizes the presence, alongside its normative and institutional

dimensions, of a function of mobilizing social support through the creation of belief in constitutional values more generally. Dialoguing with Rousseau and his “civic religion”, Belov calls it in its own way a “secular religion” directed at its “believers” – “constitutional actors, interpreters, visualisers and performative agents” (pp. 171-173).

– **Cloud constitutionalism** is what Belov calls the understanding that the meaning of constitutional norms and principles is not somehow “enclosed” in their textual formulations, but is influenced by diffusely shared social representations through the idea of “dispersed storage of imaginaries in the collective consciousness” by “clouds of constitutional meaning... [that] are part of the collective constitutional imagination and constitutional anthropology of the people” (pp. 349-350). Officially textually proclaimed, visualized and performed the constitutional ideas sediment into individual consciousnesses to make the collective a vehicle of constitutional beliefs with the potential for inverse impact on various constitutional discourses.

(b) Belov's constitutionalisms: an attempt of explanation.

The author often calls the constitutionalisms he presents “phenomena” (something objectively given to our study), but in doing so he rather underestimates his own scientific contribution. For our traditional constitutional law doctrine, constitutionalism is the ideology of democratic governance based on established law norms governing the foundations of public life³. This ideology is evolving and can be subjected to a certain historical typology (see pp. 57-58 in the reviewed work). It has a past, a present and – we believe – a future, constituting a relatively unified in its basic ideas sphere of thought, which ultimately provides a basis for speaking of a “constitutional civilization” and analyzing our place in it⁴. However, Belov consistently reflects on the postmodernist idea of pluralization of narratives and ultimately the decline of the idea of the dominant narrative of progress in Western societies. For him, “postmodern constitutionalism” deconstructs the “objective truth” ostensible in the old doctrine to a plurality of constitutional opinions and rival analytical paradigms (see pp. 42, 360). This is why constitutionalism in Belov is deconstructed to a plurality of “constitutionalisms”. These constitutionalisms, however, are no

³ See in this sense St. **Stoychev**, Constitutional Law [In Bulgarian]. Fifth supplement. ed., Sofia, Ciela Publishing House, 2002, pp. 13.

⁴ Sn. **Nacheva**, Constitutional Civilization and Bulgarian Constitutionalism [In Bulgarian], Sofia, Sibi Ciela Publishing House, 2004.

longer the “constitutionalism” that our legal doctrine spoke of in the cited works from the early years of our century. Below’s alternative "constitutionalisms" are – instead of an ordered ideology – separate coexisting tools for describing constitutional realities. These instruments the author himself does not so much “find” as observable phenomena, but independently constructs on the basis of certain given ideas in constitutional and general scientific and philosophical discourses. I therefore believe that the main contribution of the book under review is the provision of a type of alternative constitutional thinking.

Thus, to summarize, the “constitutionalisms” described above turn out to be a heterogeneous group of thought approaches, discourses, and analytical prisms applied to particular (already objectively given) constitutional phenomena from the perspective of certain foundational understandings.

I am not one of those who believe that words have any intrinsic settled meaning, so I think that the multiplication of different “constitutionalisms” in the book is a positive thing, bringing variety by developing a series of alternatives for thinking about and in constitutional law.

By “constitutionalizing” various non-legal phenomena, the candidate ultimately sends a message, grounded in multiple arguments, that **(α)** constitutional law is traditionally concentrated in particular texts (textual constitutionalism), but in the grand sweep of the book this is wholly insufficient, insofar as **(β)** the cult of these texts is part of the rationalist legacy of the Enlightenment (rational constitutionalism), which **(γ)** clashes with the inherent tendency of any legal text, and more generally of any living social phenomenon, towards implicitness and change (quantum constitutionalism). The constitutional mind's urge toward order and progress finds itself in the postmodern “dessert of the real” (Baudrillard), but – insofar as society cannot cease to exist – it seeks everywhere to discover (perhaps, in fact, to create) constitutional meaning. **(δ)** Constitutional semiotics radically extends this quest, introducing the idea that constitutional texts contain symbols of the social and find their social symbols (this mutual signification is constitutional semiosis). **(ε)** These symbols begin to live in the imagination of society, which “fantasizes” the constitution, thinking of its myths, utopias, etc. (symbolic-imaginative constitutionalism) and **(ζ)** "sees" the constitutional reflected in various visual forms (visual constitutionalism), from the flags and architectural ensembles of power to **(η)** the performative

acts of official ceremonies demonstrating and reaffirming state authority (performative constitutionalism). All of these interactions have as their basis (θ) the public's collective belief in certain constitutional ideas, understood as a surrogate “transcendence” as alternative of the religious beliefs that have cohered traditional society (transcendental constitutionalism). (ι) Constitutional systems ultimately function on the basis of certain emotions in citizens as the recipients of constitutional influence (emotional constitutionalism). (κ) The latter become the bearers of constitutional ideas in the cloudy manner described above in order to influence constitutional law in turn, for example by supporting certain governmental actions or delegitimizing certain politically relevant ideas (cloud constitutionalism).

(c) General theoretical characterization of the monograp.

If we evaluate the “Constitutional Semiotics” in terms of a traditional typology of legal thinking for general legal theory, we can summarize that Belov (α) places **legal analysis** with its norm-based judgments in a significantly broader framework, focusing on (β) the existence of a vast range of constitutionally relevant phenomena. In such a sense, Belov employs a **most radical legal sociology** because he does not simply relate facts to validity (I think it is fair to say that this is not in the strict interest of his methodology). For him, constitutional law can only be fully in relation to all its semiotic levels, if it is broken down to a vast amount of surrounding facts, and their meaning placed in a vast amount of connections and analyzed through sociology, psychology, and the arts. Legal thinking starts from the existence of social facts, derives from them certain general conditions for the validity of the legal system, and concentrates on the normative interactions of the various valid norms of that system. On the contrary, the approach in “Constitutional Semiotics” considers as legally relevant the vast range of social facts and seeks legal knowledge without fetishizing the division between Is and Ought, between the legal and all the phenomena that surround it. (γ) To summarize, Belov's study is a groundbreaking legal study that leaves the usual legal prism professed in law schools because – while accepting an analysis of the normative-institutional dimension of law – he proceeds on the assumption that this analysis cannot suffice and in fact professes a legal methodology that is ultimately based on the **sociology of law**, the **psychology of law**, and **legal anthropology**.

(d) Relation to the traditional research paradigm:

– Traditional legal thinking about the constitution concentrates on norms and principles (constitutional law, which in modernity sought mostly textual expression). Norms and principles govern certain institutions characterized by their powers and possibly by tendencies towards a certain type of political behavior (what we can call the “institutional aspect” and analyze with the political science layer of constitutional doctrine). Belov, on the contrary, by saying that there are certain “shadow constitutionalisms” (p. 7) seeks to explain “legal discourses beyond written law”.

– The various signifiers of constitutional meaning, according to Belov, are arranged in systems (p. 7, pp. 16-17, p. 24, etc.) but the author in particular, and the contemporary social sciences and humanities more generally, are no strangers to the notion that their action is hardly “systemic”, but rather that they are de-centralized discourses of a “network” type, linked to constant disputes.

– Belov risks stating that some branches of law are “more juridical” than others, pointing to tax and commercial law as examples on a par with procedural branches (p. 15), making them less semiotically charged in contrast to constitutional law with its (literal and figurative) open textuality to the humanities (p. 15).

The described clearly shows that the reviewed book demonstrates an innovative way of thinking for the Bulgarian legal science, which represents the serious contribution required from a professorial work. As a conclusion we can formulate that Martin Belov's constitutional semiotics represents an attempt to build an original methodology for the scientific study of constitutional phenomena (constitutional law and the ideology of constitutionalism). In this sense, the author speaks of his own metatheory (p. 14). Belov, who in a series of older studies has successfully presented himself as a follower of the socio-legal approach (see pp. 11-12), now arrives at a sweeping generalization representing his own version of socio-legal research on constitutions and constitutionalism.

(e) Positive characteristics of the book:

– The second habilitation work under consideration is built on an encyclopaedic principle, which allows it to introduce into the circulation of the Bulgarian scientific press and

teaching a broad overview of contemporary constitutional theories, and on the other hand to find ways of interaction between legal science and humanities with the benefit of multidisciplinary interactions between them. The author conceives and implements constitutional semiotics on the basis of a wide range of “intellectual, conceptual, and methodological borrowings from other scholarly disciplines and theories” (p. 23), thus demonstrating his high erudition.

– With his challenging formulations alternative to traditional constitutional analysis, the author provides an opportunity for a series of further explorations of his own, which could be taken up by other scholars on topics such as “constitutionally relevant art” (p. 261), “constitutional myths and constitutional mythology” – already in particularized historical and national contexts. Martin Belov's *Constitutional Semiotics* is a conceptual work written at a high scholarly level, already highly praised abroad and fulfilling the requirements for the professorship sought by the candidate. The significant extent to which the author builds on what he achieved in his first habilitation is clearly demonstrated.

(f) Additional Notes.

– It should be noted that the book reviewed here purposely does not contain specific examples (see the explicit note in this cm. on p. 24) applying the proposed innovative methodology. I trust that the present scholarly jury will give Martin Belov credit for his ability to produce a series of concrete studies along the lines he himself has forged, and that the candidate, in his renewed vigor as a professor of constitutional law, will not be slow to demonstrate them to the scholarly community. In this sense, the large-scale semiotic approach – to take advantage of the book's assumed possibility of an interaction between constitutionalism and public arts (pp. 257-258) – is Chekhov's rifle hanging on the wall that should produce a shot in the next act of the scientific storyline assessed here.

– It cannot but be noted that in his “*Constitutional Semiotics*” M. Belov cites Bulgarian legal doctrine too rarely. The opposite approach would show the respect for our scholarly past that is necessary in a national academic context, even when – as in the present groundbreaking work, it is difficult to look for any continuity.

4. Evaluation of the other scientific works submitted by the candidate.

4.1. Stage and studio work.

Martin Belov demonstrates consistency in the implementation of an original scientific program and develops his own style in the creation of a series of “short” scientific forms – studies and articles in three main areas:

(a) Issues of the evolution and contemporary state of constitutional models by proposing a series of constitutional typologies and evolving concepts, for example with the idea of Westphalian, post-Westphalian and neo-Westphalian constitutionalism⁵ .

(b) Problems of the Functioning of Constitutional Systems in Transformation, Crisis and Emergency⁶ . Thus, Belov has become involved in major academic discussions on topics such as global constitutionalism, judicial dialogue, illiberal constitutionalism, and populism ref. On the other hand, these topics have in turn enabled him to develop concepts such as global algorithmic technocracy and, with ample evidence of relevance, that of constitutional polycrisis (the latter of which I use constantly in my lecture classes, which, it seems to me, shows that the author's work is alive and relevant in explaining the world around us). The resulting issues are addressed both conceptually - for the construction of relevant concepts - and in a global comparative legal or national Bulgarian perspective⁷ , the latter placing Bulgaria in the "big picture" context of global

⁵ See, for example, [Three Models for Ordering Constitutional Orders](#), in *Pravni Zapisi*, Year XIII, Nr. 2 (2022), pp. 361-387; [Territory, Territoriality and Territorial Politics as Public Law Concepts](#), in Belov, M. (ed.) *Territorial Politics and Secession. Constitutional and International Law Dimensions*, Palgrave, 2021, pp. 15-45. [Global Rule of Law instead of Global Democracy? Legitimacy of Global Judicial Empire on the Edge between Westphalian and post-Westphalian Constitutionalism](#), in Belov, M. (ed.) *The Role of Courts in Contemporary Legal Orders*, The Hague, Eleven, 2019, ISBN 978-9462369207, pp. 99-133.

⁶ [Rule of Law and Democracy in Times of Transitory Constitutionalism, Constitutional Polycrisis and Emergency Constitutionalism: Towards a Global Algorithmic Technocracy?](#), in: Belov, M. (ed.) *Rule of Law in Crisis: Constitutionalism in a State of Flux*, Routledge, 2023, pp. 21-47. [Post-human Constitutionalism? A Critical Defence of Anthropocentric and Humanist Traditions in Algorithmic Society](#), in Belov, M. (ed.) *The IT Revolution and its Impact on State, Constitutionalism and Public Law*, Oxford, Hart, 2021. [The Role of Fear Politics in Global Constitutional 'Ernstfall': Images of Fear under COVID-19 Health Paternalism](#), in Belov, M. (ed.) *Populist Constitutionalism and Illiberal Democracies. Between Constitutional Imagination, Normative Entrenchment and Political Reality*, Cambridge, Intersentia, 2021, pp. 187-221.

⁷ See for example Structural [Adjustments of the Bulgarian to the EU Constitutional Order](#). Puff (eds) *National Constitutions and the EU Integration*, Oxford, Hart, 2022, ISBN 9781509906741, pp. 33-59; [Constitutional Nationalism and Constitutional Globalism on the edge of Westphalian and Post-Westphalian Constitutionalism: the Bulgarian Case](#), in. 221-251; [Mastering emergency situations: the activist role of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court in redefining the constitutional design of war, state of siege and state of emergency](#), in Belov, M (ed.) *Courts and Judicial Activism under Crisis Conditions: Policy Making in a Time of Illiberalism and Emergency Constitutionalism*, Routledge, 2021, ISBN 978-1032060828, pp. 171-194. The [Constitutional Court as a human rights court? State of the system of access to the Constitutional Court of the](#)

socio-political trends and representing a contribution less frequently demonstrated in our legal doctrine.

(c) Problems of individual constitutional law institutes and principles viewed in a comparative law prism⁸.

Against the background of the presented scientific production, it makes an impression that the monographic ideas of the above-reviewed “second habilitation” do not simply represent a collection of previously developed individual parts, but a comprehensive new research, paving the way to new topics rather than exploiting the achievements of the old ones.

4.2 Constitutional Law Textbook – Constitutional Law in Bulgaria, Deventer, Kluwer, 2019, 258 p.

Assoc. Martin Belov is the author of – to my knowledge – the first textbook on Bulgarian constitutional law published in a foreign language for the international audience. It consistently deals with the history and principles of the national constitutional system, the system of sources of constitutional law, the form of government with its characteristic institutions of central power and the form of state structure. This contribution in itself deserves an excellent evaluation and shows the high scientific level achieved by the author in the development of his books.

Republic of Bulgaria in relation to the protection of human rights and proposals for its reform, in Valchev, D., M. The Rule of Law in Bulgaria. Current Issues in Constitutional Justice and the Judiciary, Sofia, Sofia University Publishing House, 2021, pp. 56-99.

⁸ **Human Dignity in Bulgaria**, in Becchi, P. H. Mathis (eds.) Handbook of Human Dignity in Europe. Vienna: Springer, 2019, pp. 130-149. **Legislation in Bulgaria**, in: Xanthaki, H., U. Karpen (eds.) Legislation in Europe. A Country by Country Guide, Oxford, Hart, 2020, pp. 69-86. **Humanism and rationalism as the founding normative ideologies of constitutionalism**, in Novkirishka, M., M. Belov, D. Nachev (eds.) Scientific Conference "Human Rights - 70 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", pp. 69-90

5. Overall assessment.

Guided by the above, I confidently give a positive assessment of the candidature of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Kirilov Belov for the position of Professor in 3.6 Law (Constitutional Law) and recommend the members of the Scientific Jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Law to elect Assoc. Belov to the said position. I will vote in the same sense and with conviction at the final meeting of this procedure.

Sofia,

12 November 2023

Симеон Гройсман