

OPINION

by **Dr. Stoyan Iliev Chilikov, Associate Professor of Paisii Hilendarski
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of the materials submitted for participation in the competition
for the academic position of ‘ **Associate professor**’
at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

in the field of higher education: 2. Humanities, Professional field: 2.4 Religion
and Theology
(CHURCH ARCHEOLOGY)

In the competition for ‘associate professor’, announced in the State Gazette,
issue 100 of 16. 12. 2022 and in the website of Sofia University St. Kliment
Ohridski

for the needs of the Faculty of Theology, as a candidate participates
Venzislav Karavalchev.

1. General presentation of the received materials

Subject:

By order of the Rector of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the
academic position of 'associate professor' in Sofia University in the field of higher
education 2. Humanities, Professional field: 2.4 Religion and Theology
(CHURCH ARCHEOLOGY), **announced for the needs of the Faculty of
Theology.**

Documents for participation in the announced competition have been
submitted by the only candidate Dr. Vencislav Karavalchev.

Presented by Dr. Vencislav Karavalchev set of paper materials is in accordance with the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of Sofia University, and includes the following documents:

- Application for admission to the competition;
- Autobiography
- Diploma for Master's degree;
- Diploma for PhD degree;
- List of scientific works;
- Information on compliance with the minimum national requirements;
- Annotations of the materials;
- Declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- Certificate of work experience;
- Documents for educational work;
- Documents for scientific-research work.

The candidate has submitted a total of 17 scientific papers, of which 2 monographs and 15 articles.

Vencislav Karavalchev has a master's degree and a doctorate in theology, obtained from the Sofia University. He specialized in prestigious universities in Switzerland, Italy, Greece and Great Britain. He has extensive teaching experience. Initially he taught at the Theological Seminary in Georgia, then at the Theological Institute "St. Andrey" in Ukraine, and since 2017 to this day in the Faculty of Theology of Sofia University, where he teaches disciplines related to the competition for which he is appearing.

Evaluation of scientific activity

Dr. Karavalchev's scientific interests are multifaceted, but according to their importance, they are concentrated in two main thematic circles: the first is in the

field of Church archaeology, and the second in the field of church history and hagiology. I consider the methodology of Dr. Karavalchev's scientific work to be a contributing point, namely the combination of history with hagiology in search of answers to the questions and problems of Church archaeology. This contributing point is also contained in the habilitation thesis submitted to me for review. The topic of the research is interesting, current and innovative, implying reaching new scientific discoveries.

I will single out two more contributing moments from Dr. Karavalchev's monographic work. In the first place is the extraction of new scientific data concerning forgotten saints in connection with the history of Christianity in Anchialo. The author provides new data, which he successfully interprets in relation to the life and activities of St. Sotas of Anchial and St. Jacob of Anchial. The third contribution point, which is inherent not only to the habilitation work, but also to the overall scientific production of the candidate in the competition, is the in-depth scientific research work and analysis based on source texts and work with manuscripts and archival materials.

Bearing in mind the enormous scientific potential of Dr. Valchev, I would like to recommend that in the future he should publish more in refereed and indexed scientific publications in world-famous databases.

CONCLUSION

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment to the candidate in the competition. Therefore, I would like to recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Theology for election of Dr. Karavalchev at the academic position of 'associate professor' at the Sofia University in the field of higher education education 2. Humanities, Professional field: 2.4 Religion and Theology (CHURCH ARCHEOLOGY).