

REVIEW

By Prof. Miljana Kajmakamova, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, 2.2 History and Archaeology, assigned to be a member of the Academic Panel, under Ordinance № 3-PK-22/05.10.2022 3-PK-258/17.06.2022 by the Rector of NBU, reviewing the academic work submitted for the contest for the academic position Professor in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, as announced in SG, issue 65/12.08.2022, candidate: Assoc. Prof. Thomas Ivanov Tomov, PhD

I. Assessment for conformity with the minimum national requirements and requirements of the New Bulgarian University

No violations were committed in the tender procedure. The candidate has not only met the minimum national requirements under Article 26 of the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University, but according to the indicators in three of the groups he exceeded them (indicator 6 of group D, indicator 12 of group D, indicators 17, 21, 24 of group E, indicators 24 and 32 of group Z, indicator 37 of group H). This is evident from the reference and bibliographic description of the evidence in Appendix 2, attached by Assoc. Prof. Thomas Tomov, PhD.

II. Research (creative) activities and results

In the announced competition, Assoc. Prof. Tomov participated with 5 monographs, 1 textbook, 2 study aids and 48 scientific articles, as well as with participation with reports in various Bulgarian and International conferences, projects, etc. In their entirety, they reflect his diverse interests in the field of medieval Bulgarian, Byzantine, Balkan and Russian history. In addition, the research is evidence of the candidate's aspiration to expand the scientific problematic depending on specific studies of source material and the need to undergo a more detailed analysis of less studied or new historiographical problems. Judged from a historical point of view, the publications are important for expanding and deepening the study of a number of important spheres of modern Byzantine and Medieval studies. Their contributing nature is also confirmed by the citations, which number 158, indicated in foreign studies, which are published in refereed and indexed editions.

Assoc. Prof. Tomov's publications are characterized by precision in the analysis, comprehensiveness of the sources and research used in substantiating one or another topic

developed by him. The studies related to the cultural and political development of medieval Bulgaria and the Medieval Balkans are directed to detail less studied aspects of this process in the literature so far (No. 9, 12, 13, 22, 25, 30, 33, 36). A significant part of the publications is dedicated to the graffiti inscriptions and drawings from the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, discovered and studied by Tomov in the period from 2005 to 2021 (No. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48). This group of studies represents a preliminary stage of his research program related to his independent study of these very interesting monuments. The research work carried out by colleague Tomov is of a pioneering nature and this fact deserves a special mention. Through its complete realization, he presents with a dignity modern Bulgarian Byzantine and Medieval studies.

The main place among the works presented is the monograph "THE UNKNOWN TEMPLE OF HAGIA SOPHIA. Part I: Cyrillic and Glagolitic Graffiti Inscriptions (second, enlarged and revised edition), Sofia 2019, 338 pp. It includes 94 Cyrillic and one Glagolitic graffiti inscription, found by Assoc. Prof. Tomov on the balustrades, the columns and the wall lining of the galleries of the most important religious building of Constantinople, built by the emperor Justinian I the Great (527-565.) In their research, the author drew on diverse sources and a significant volume of literature. The study is accompanied by diverse photographic material and illustrations that reinforce its high scientific value and completeness.

Particularly useful for future research is a characterization of graffiti made in the Introduction to the monograph. Thematically, the author divides them into short records that appeared during a visit to the temple, records in the form of a chronicle, prayer inscriptions and drawings. Attention was also drawn to the lack of a uniform methodology used in their research by specialists. Based above all on his personal experience, the colleague Tomov came to the main conclusion that it is best to carry out a primary inspection and reading for each inscription, after which they should be fixed and studied in office conditions. According to him, this is necessary due to their large number, the limited time for their immediate study and the large flow of tourists. Considering these and some other circumstances, T. Tomov uses the digital photo method as a starting point for the study of graffiti inscriptions. For future research, the classification of the graffiti inscriptions, which are united into the following groups, is important: inscriptions-prayer; inscriptions-autographs, chronicle inscriptions and varia. By revealing the specific features of the graffiti inscriptions, Assoc. Prof. Tomov turns them into a new, full-value source for the history and folk culture, especially of Russians, Bulgarians and Serbs.

The monograph contains a detailed description of the galleries of the Church of Hagia Sophia. Here I would like to draw attention to the fact that in the sources the information about them is poor or missing, and for this reason the researchers have particular difficulty in presenting them. T. Tomov managed to create as complete an idea as possible of their functionality, based on the extremely scarce data in the sources, research, and also on his personal observations. As a result, he came to the essential conclusion that ‘galleries were a traditional element in temple architecture and played the role of additional rooms with a universal purpose’.

The scientific weight of the research increases especially with the specific study of the text of the graffiti inscriptions, carved respectively in the western, southern and northern galleries of the Church of Hagia Sophia. Each of the inscription is presented with its main characteristics, namely: location, material, dimensions, preservation, text, restored text, translation, attribution, commentary, paleography, and dating. Their clarification was carried out through a detailed comparative analysis with the use of examples from different sources and the results of related scientific research. I have reason to note that with the observations and conclusions made by T. Tomov, he establishes himself as an expert connoisseur of graffiti inscriptions, who provides rich material for further new directions in the study of Slavic epigraphic monuments, the history of writing, etc.

This conclusion of mine is also confirmed by the concluding part of the monograph, which is devoted to the paleography and spelling of the graffiti inscriptions on the one hand, and to the author's historical notes on the other. A number of important questions related to their authors, orthographic features, anthroponymy, literacy of Slavic pilgrims, etc. have been answered here. The graphs, tables and diagrams dedicated to the distribution of the inscriptions deserve attention (p. 200, p. 201, p. 206). The appendices placed at the end of the monograph further enrich the study, giving it a complete character.

After the detailed presentation of my assessment of the contribution nature of the monograph, I have every reason to point out that this is the first study of its kind dedicated to the comprehensive study of graffiti inscriptions written by the hand of Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian pilgrims. By its very nature, the work is a corpus, with the help of which this type of epigraphic material is introduced into active circulation, to be used by a wide range of specialists in the field of humanities. With this work, colleague Tomov, deepens and expands the idea of the ‘living’ life in the Church of Hagia Sophia and in the City of Bosphorus, refracted through the prism of Slavic pilgrims and worshipers residing in the Byzantine capital for a certain period of time.

Another field of his scientific pursuits Assoc. Prof. Tomov presents in his monograph entitled *THE SECRETS OF HAGIA SOPHIA: The Forgotten Ship Graffiti and Their Messages*, Sofia 2021, 263 pp. It includes numerous graffiti drawings discovered and studied by him in the period 2007-2014, which at the same time are distinguished by a great thematic variety.

This research gives answers to a number of difficult and controversial questions (recognition of the ships, their sizes, the dating of ships graffiti, the profile of their authors, etc.). The essential conclusion reveals that the graffiti drawings from the Church of Hagia Sophia are divided into two large groups, namely: with Western European (44 pieces) and local, Eastern European construction (9 pieces). The main result of the study of ships graffiti is that their researcher gives valuable new information about medieval shipping and vessels in general. Undoubtedly, this work of his also represents a comprehensive corpus of ship graffiti from Hagia Sophia, which will be extremely useful for future studies of the maritime history of Constantinople/Istanbul.

In the process of his scientific development, T. Tomov established himself as one of the rare Bulgarian specialists in the problems of the historical geography of the Medieval Balkans and of Medieval Bulgaria and their military history. In support of this is his monograph with the short title 'KLYUCH 1014'. I will point out with conviction that this is one of the most detailed studies dedicated to the memorable event, which confirms him as an excellent connoisseur of the geography and toponymy of the Valley of Strumeshnitsa River. At the same time, Tomov carries out a detailed analysis of the military actions, makes original clarifications of the toponymy, the roads, the strategy, the numbers of the two armies. The attached maps, sketches and illustrations visualize the idea of the area and orientation in the context of the events.

I would not pass by the work of T. Tomov with the original title "Byzantium known and unknown", it has undergone two editions (2012 and 2014), the second being revised and supplemented. It is written in the spirit of the latest Byzantine research and is based on the vast published source material. I will point out that with this book the author makes a successful attempt to show to the student audience and a wider circle of readers his deep understanding of the empire and the strong influence of the Byzantine civilization on the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans and Western Europe.

As can be seen from the presented documentation, T. Tomov actively participates with reports in various thematic Bulgarian and International conferences, round tables, seminars, etc. In addition, he has a number of media appearances related to the promotion of his own and foreign discoveries and achievements. In view of the requirements of the announced competition, it is necessary to point out that he is the head of the scientific project *Byzantine Antiquities in Istanbul* of the CFSI of the New Bulgarian University (2013). An expression of his socio-scientific activity is his participation as a member of the British Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies and of the International

Association of Byzantinists and Medievalists in Bulgaria. He was a scientific consultant on book devoted to a Roman and Medieval history in various Bulgarian publishing houses.

III. Teaching and teaching activities

In parallel with the intensive scientific activity, T. Tomov also carries out his educational and teaching activities. He participates in various curricula of many academic disciplines with different content. They are distinguished by a thematic variety which is indicative of his broad interests and of his preference for subjects and problems which he himself explores. There are authored study materials in Moodle for two full-time study courses - 'Introduction to Christianity' and 'Culture of Ancient Rome'. He takes part in conducting state exams, guiding graduates, reviewing doctoral theses and as a candidate for a 'professor' competition, etc.

He participated in the initiation, composition, organization, conduct, renewal, control and preparation of the accreditations by NAOA of all bachelor's programs in 2012, as well as in the accreditation of all programs in the three degrees of education - bachelor's, master's, doctor's, offered by Departments 'History' and 'Mediterranean and Eastern Studies' of NBU from 2006 to 2012/2013 academic years as Dean of the Bachelor Faculty, and Vice Rector of the New Bulgarian University.

IV. Administrative and Social Work

During the years of his teaching and scientific activity at NBU, T. Tomov was an active participant in its management and public life. He has been a member of the scientific council of the Department of Mediterranean and Eastern Studies of the NBU since 2006. In the period 2008-2012, he was the chairman of the quality committee of the Bachelor's Faculty and of the attestation committee at the NBU and a member of the academic development committee member of the NBU, member of the Academic Council of the NBU. He was repeatedly elected as a member of the FS at the Bachelor's Faculty of NBU. He was also Vice Rector for Academic and International Activities of the NBU and Dean of the Bachelor Faculty of the NBU.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)

Since 2015, Associate Professor Tomov was recruited as a teacher in the master's program 'Bulgarian Middle Ages: State, Society, Culture' at the Faculty of History of the Sofia University of St. Kliment Ohridski. I have a direct impression of his activity in my capacity as its leader in the period up to the academic year 2017/2018, and subsequently only as a teacher. His course enjoys constant interest from students.

Based on the overall examination of the educational and scientific activity and the specified contributions of the publications on the competition, I express my convinced opinion that **Assoc. Prof. Toma Ivanov Tomov** fully deserves the occupation of the academic position of **'professor'** in professional direction 2.2. History and Archaeology for the needs of the Bachelor Faculty, Department of Mediterranean and Eastern Studies of the NBU.

Date: December 4, 2022

Signature

Prof. Miljana Kajmakamova