



REVIEW

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Regarding the candidacy of Assoc. Dr. Toma Tomov for the scientific position of "Professor"

and his habilitation thesis with title

"St. Sofia". Part I. Inscriptions-graffiti in Cyrillic and Glagolitic", Sofia, Veles Consult, 2019

(ISBN: 978-619-188-246-5, 336 pages).

The habilitation thesis of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Toma I. Tomov is a second, augmented, improved and enriched with graphics and tables corrected edition of a book which he first published in 2016 and whose title was "The Unknown Temple "St. Sofia" Part I. Inscriptions-graffiti in Cyrillic and Glagolitic", Sofia 2016 (ISBN: 978-954-2987-24-6, 260 pages). In the enriched and supplemented version of the book which Tomov proposes as a habilitation work, Tomov elaborates and deepens his research on the subject of the Slavic, Cyrillic and Glagolitic inscriptions-graffiti in the Justinian Temple of God's Wisdom (Ἁγία Σοφία) in Constantinople.

The book consists of the following chapters:

1. Introduction.
2. Presentation of the epigraphic material found in the galleries of "St. Sofia".

3. Description and transcription of the Cyrillic and Glagolitic inscriptions-graffiti in the western, southern and northern galleries of the church.
4. Conclusions, consisting of two parts - paleography and orthography of the inscriptions, and historical notes.
5. Very detailed bibliography.
6. Three appendices, including schemes with the locations of the inscriptions in the galleries, photos of the galleries of "St. Sofia", and photos of the inscriptions in galleries.
7. Name index and summary in English.

Summarizing, the author's main conclusions on the research topic are as follows:

1. The dominant part of the inscriptions consists of a very short phrase, containing only a name, separate words or letters, or some traditional formulas-cliché.
2. Unlike manuscripts written by professional scribes obeying certain norms of writing, most of the authors of graffiti inscriptions are not particularly trained people and allow themselves to insert features from the spoken language, thus creating an adequate picture of their medieval communities.
3. Some of the analyzed inscriptions-graffiti, offer specific graphic, orthographic and morphological features, which are characteristic of the "literary" or "household" orthographic systems existing in Russia, systems distinguished by the absence or presence of some graphemes and of different rules for the usage of some graphemes.
4. The authors of autographs and prayer inscriptions are often called by their usual everyday non-Christian names, and thanks to this feature, our ideas about the composition of Old Russian and Balkan-Slavic anthroponomy are significantly expanded.
5. The observations on the paleography of the graffiti inscriptions from "St. Sofia" show that it is very peculiar and differs significantly from the book graphics. According to the author, the graffiti from "St. Sofia" provide valuable material for comparing the handwritings from the epigraphic monuments with those available in manuscripts.
6. Of particular value are inscriptions containing a date in the text or offering the possibility of dating on the basis of mentioned famous historical persons or events.

7. From the 92 Slavic inscriptions-graffiti available in the Constantinopolitan church of "St. Sofia" 63 are Russian, 6 are Bulgarian, 1 is Wallachian, 1 is Serbian and 1 is Glagolitic. The neutral graffiti, which could hardly be attributed to any of the listed groups, are 19. According to these statistics, the peak of Russian visits to "St. Sofia" was from the second half of the 14th to the 20s of the 15th century.

The book by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Toma Tomov "St. Sofia". Part I. Inscriptions-graffiti in Cyrillic and Glagolitic" undoubtedly constitutes a comprehensive and completely original contribution to the study of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchal Church of "St. Sofia", unavailable in Bulgarian until 2019.

The last monographic work of Dr. Tomov was published in 2021 and is again related to the Justinian Temple of the God's Wisdom in Constantinople. It is entitled "Secrets of "St. Sofia". The Forgotten Graffiti Ships and Their Messages' (ISBN 978-619-7462-27-2) and is dedicated to those graffiti in the church of "St. Sofia" which depict ships. The author has carefully arranged and systematized his own photographic material according to the order of the galleries and floors where the ship drawings-graffiti are located. The types of ship images established by him are divided into the following four varieties:

1. Uncertain images which are only supposed to reproduce objects similar to ships.
2. Images outlining the ship's hull but without masts and sails.
3. Schematic images reproducing the hull, masts and some elements of the standing and flying rigging, and the sails.
4. Full ship images engraved with great detail.

The author develops and enriches the typology of ship varieties depicted in "St. Sofia", specifying whether the drawings depict single-masted or two-masted vessels, heavy military dromons of the Byzantine type, light or heavy Venetian galleys, fore or aft rigged, rowing ships with one person per oar (alla zenzile) , or with several rowers per oar (a scallocio). Dr. Tomov even identifies some images as representing exclusively commercial vessels, regardless that in the Mediterranean until the advent of the steam engine in the 19th century, the difference between an armed merchant ship and a military rowing vessel loaded with goods was purely

theoretical and in reality did not exist. In conclusion, I should emphasize that the contributions of this monographic work are undeniable.

I reviewed in detail all the documentation of Dr. Tomov concerning his candidacy for professor and I found that his scientific contributions far exceed the minimum academic and national requirements for holding this position. Based on the above considerations, I propose to the honorable scientific jury without hesitation to elect Assoc. Prof. Dr. Toma Tomov as a full-time professor.



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